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## THE HILLYARS AND THE BURTONS: A STORY OF TWO FAMILIES.

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### CHAPTER LXIX.

SAMUEL BURTON MAKES HIS LAST VISIT  
TO STANLAKE.

"A CURSED climate," said Samuel Burton, between his set teeth; "a God-forgotten climate. If I can get my boy away out of this, I'll never set foot in it again. *He* may come home here and live like a gentleman, when I have made his fortune, and am—"

He could not say the word "dead." He could not face it. He cursed himself for having approached so near the subject. If any one had been watching his face, he would have seen a look of wild ghastly terror in it.

The time and place, when and where, we pick him up again, were not by any means cheerful or inspiring. He was toiling, in pitch darkness, through wild November sleet, over one of the high downs near Croydon, towards Stanlake.

"I wouldn't care for anything," he went on musing, "if it wasn't for that. If I wasn't afraid of dying, I could be happy. And it ain't what is to come after that frightens me, neither; there is uncertainty enough about *that*. But it is the act of dying which frightens me so. It must be so very, very horrid. Bah! I have lived a coward, and, oh Lord, I must die a coward. Why, the distinct dread of the terror I shall feel

in dying nearly maddens me. What will the terror itself be like, when I feel it coming on?"

Although the bitter sleet was driving in his face, and racking his sun-warmed muscles with twinges of rheumatism, yet he found that he was in a sweat—in the sweat of hopeless terror.

"And yet the main of men ain't afraid of it. There was that young keeper at Stanlake in old times—what was his name again?—ah! Bill Harker, that was the man—that was shot. He died hard enough, but he wasn't afraid of it; and I wasn't afraid of seeing a fellow die neither in those times, as I am now. He wasn't afraid of it for *himself*; he kept on, when the very death-agony was on him, 'Oh, my poor wife! Oh, what will become of my poor little wife!' What the devil made him think of *her*, I wonder, at such a time as that, with an ounce of small shot in his stomach?"

That was very puzzling indeed; but he did not let it puzzle him long. He came back to the great point at issue: How this terror of the act of dying—which was undoubtedly a nuisance so great that at times it made life not worth having—was to be abated or abolished. Nuisances not half so great had been often denounced by the public press as being inconsistent with progress. And yet here was a great standing public nuisance, with no remedy suggested.

He was obliged to bring his train of thought to a standstill, and curse the climate "*pour samuser*."

"I wish I knew where my boy was living," he began thinking again. "I shall have to make to Morton's lodge; and there are certain risks about that. He might give me up; and, before Sir George could be communicated with, I should be tight in for ten years over the Lawrence Street business. It's a terrible risk my being here. Why, Sir George couldn't save me, if I was seen by the traps. However, I'll have my boy out of this if I die for it."

As he walked he got drenched to the skin in the icy shower; and his courage cooled. "I hardly dare go near him; I think I must be mad; but he is never the man to give up an old fellow-servant who knows so much. No."

Scrambling down the steep chalk wall of Whitley Hill, he came to the long grass ride through Whitley Copse which led to Morton's lodge. The moon, fighting with the north-easterly scud, shone out sometimes and showed him his way; so, during a longer gleam than any which had gone before, he found himself close to the lodge, which was perfectly dark and silent in the moonlight; though he could see that another great bank of rack was driving up, and that night would soon be black once more.

He hesitated, and then whistled. As he had expected, Rory and Tory (Irish), Lad and Ony (Ladoga and Onega, Russian), Don and Sancho (Spanish), Lady and Lovely (Clumber), not to mention Vic, Jip, Jack, Nip, Ven, Dick, and Snap (English terriers), took up the question all at once: declared that they had never closed an eye; that they had heard him a mile off, but had deep political reasons for not barking before; and generally behaved with that mixture of humbug and overstrained conscientiousness which dogs assume when they are taken by surprise.

Samuel had lived so long in a country where hydrophobia is unknown that he had almost forgotten the existence of that horrible disease, and would far

sooner have faced a dangerous dog than an innocent slow-worm. He merely scolded them away, right and left, and, going up to the door, knocked loudly.

A voice, evidently from bed, said, "Father, is that you?"

He said, "Yes, Reuben. Get up, and let me in."

The owner of the voice was heard instantly to get out of bed. In a few moments a young man had opened the door, and was standing before Samuel in his shirt and breeches, looking at him with eager curiosity. But it was not Reuben; it was a taller young man than he, with a very square face, and keen blue eyes. Though he had nothing on but his breeches and shirt, he stood there with his bare legs in the cold night air for more than half a minute, staring at Samuel.

Samuel saw the father's face at once. "You are young Morton," he said.

"Yes," said the young man; "and, from what you said just now, you must be Reuben's father, Sam Burton. I have heard a deal of you, but I never thought to have seen you. Come in."

Young Morton dressed himself, and took another long look at Samuel. "So you are come after Reuben?"

"No," said Samuel, lying because it was easiest. "I have come after your father; but where is Reuben?"

"He is with father."

"Can you tell me where your father is? I want to see him on a matter of life and death."

The young man turned his face to the fire, and remained silent a long time. At last he said,—

"I hope I am not doing wrong in telling you, Mr. Burton. I was told to tell no one. We are in terrible trouble and confusion here, and I hope I shall not increase it. But I will sleep over it. You must stay here to-night, and to-morrow morning, unless I alter my mind, I will tell you."

Young Morton did not alter his mind in the morning; just before they parted he said—

"You know the Black Lion, Church Street, Chelsea?"

Samuel rather thought he did. He, however, expressed to young Morton that he had some vague recollection of a licensed victualler's establishment, not a hundred miles from that spot, with a somewhat similar sign.

Young Morton laughed. "Well, my father and Reuben are to be heard of there," he said.

"But, my dear young man," said Samuel, "I put it to you whether I dare go near the place. Come."

"I don't know anything about that, Mr. Burton. There they are; and, if you want to see them, there you must go. Good morning."

## CHAPTER LXX.

SIR GEORGE AND SAMUEL CLOSE THEIR ACCOUNTS, AND DISSOLVE PARTNERSHIP.

SNEAKING from pillar to post, sauntering into doorways and waiting till suspicious persons had passed, sometimes again walking briskly, as though with a purpose before him, and sometimes turning his back on the place for which he was bound, Samuel Burton at length reached the narrow passage which leads into Garden Grove, and set himself to watch the Black Lion.

It was eight o'clock, and a bitterly bleak night. The keen east wind, after roaming through the dust heaps in Garden Grove, concentrated itself, and rushed through this passage, as through a large organ pipe, of which Samuel formed the reed. His whole body began to give forth a dull, monotonous wail from every projection, which increased in violence with the strength of the agonizing wind, but never altered one single note. When he *did* get to bed after this eventful night he instantly dreamt that he was an Æolian harp, and that Sir George Hillyar the elder came and tuned him.

The dry, searching wind, intensely cold, pinched up his already pinched-up face, until it looked more like that of a weasel than of a man; and his long, thin nose, red and blue, peered querulously out into the darkness, as though

he were looking with that, and not with the beady eyes above it, deep sunk under his heavy eyebrows. There came two impudent and low-lived boys into the passage, the one of whom formally introduced him to the other. "This, Ben," said the young ruffian, "is my uncle, the undertaker's man. He's a-waiting for a ride home in the hearse, and is going inside, as his lungs is delicate."

He really did look like something of that kind; for, when he had taken to pietism, to see what that would do for him, he had, as being the first and easiest step in that direction, taken to dress himself in black clothes with a white necktie; and, although he had given up religion as a bad job, finding that even the lowest and most superstitious form of it demanded inexorably a moral practice which to him seemed a ghastly impossibility, yet he stuck, at all events, to what he considered one of the outward symbols of godliness, and always appeared in public in so scrupulously correct a costume that it would have stricken one of our advanced young parsons dumb with a mingled feeling of wonder and contempt.

So he stood for a long time, shivering with cold, and thinking whether he dared show himself in the bar of the Black Lion, and concluding most unhesitatingly that he dared not. But, if Reuben and Morton were to be heard of there, there was every chance of his seeing one or another of them coming in or out; so he waited. I suspect it is easier for an old convict to wait than for you or me. When one has got accustomed to wait in the blank horrid darkness of a prison cell for the warder to bring one one's food, waiting becomes easy, although patience may be a virtue which has taken wings long ago.

So he waited impatiently, cursing time, for one knows not how long. But after a while he cursed no more, and was impatient no more. Every other feeling was absorbed in one—intense eager curiosity.

The shrill driving easterly wind had brought the London smoke with it,

mixed with fog ; it had been barely possible to see across the street. Samuel had tried, three or four times, to make out the vast looming mass of Church Place, the old home of the Burtons, in the darkness, and had not succeeded. But by one of those laws which guide the great river fogs, some side puff of wind, some sudden change in the weight of the atmosphere, the river fog was lifted, and the whole of the great house stood out before him. It was all dark below, but aloft the great dormer window—the window of Reuben's old room—was blazing with light.

He watched now with bated breath. He could see the old palings which surrounded the house, and saw that the gate in them was open. He had not long found out this when he saw Reuben and Morton together come out from that gate, cross the street, and go into the "Black Lion."

Like a cat, like a weasel, like a slinking leopard—like a young member, with no faith save the rules of debate, whatever they may be, who sits with hungry eyes to catch a poor old man, old enough to be his grandfather, tripping—Samuel Burton slid across the street, and passed unobserved and wondering into the old house.

His first idea had been to wait about in the vast rooms, which he saw were lightless and deserted, until he found out how the land lay ; and with this view he slipped into the great room on the first floor, and waited there in the dark. But not for long. There were too many ghosts there ; and ghosts, as every one knows, have no manners—they have never yet been made to take any hint, however strongly given, that their company is unacceptable : they will not behave even like the most tiresome of morning visitors, and go when the lady of the house sees something remarkable out of window. The behaviour of the ghosts in this empty old room was exceedingly rude toward the miserable, godless, superstitious old convict. One gentleman, indeed, an ex-warder, whose brains Samuel had seen knocked out with a shovel, in a stringy-bark forest,

some fifteen years before, was so offensively assiduous in his attentions that he found it necessary to go out on to the stairs, and, when there, to go up them towards what might be capture and ruin, sooner than have any further *tête-à-tête* with the Sinttram companions, whose acquaintance he had made in a life of selfish rascality.

But he really was not much alarmed ; he saw there was some hole-and-corner work going on, and that gave him confidence. People who took possession of the garrets of deserted houses must be doing something secret, something in his way. The risk was certainly great, but he determined to face it. Sneaking curiosity had become a second nature to him ; and, besides, it was not a much greater danger than he had run in approaching the place at all.

So he gained the door of Reuben's room, and looked in, and then drew back amazed. It was comfortably furnished, and full of light, not only from a blazing fire, but from two or three candles dispersed about it. Everything was still, except a heavy breathing of some sleepers ; and after a momentary hesitation he looked in again.

On a sofa opposite to him was stretched a large man, sleeping heavily. In a bed close to the fire lay another man, with his face turned from him, and both were apparently asleep. The man on the sofa had his face turned towards him, and he could see every feature plainly. And, after the first glance at that face, curiosity mastered every other feeling, and he went softly in and gazed on him.

A big, red-faced, handsome giant, whose chest went gently up and down in the deep breathing of sleep, and whose innocent, silly mouth was wreathed into a smile at some foolish dream ! Samuel thrust his long thin nose close to him, and his little eyes dilated with a maddened curiosity. He knew him, and he didn't know him. Who on earth was it ? As he stood there watching, risk, time, place, everything was forgotten. Where *had* he seen this man before ? He sent his memory ranging back to the very beginning of his life,



and could not remember. Had he gone mad?—or had he slept for twenty years, and had Erne Hillyar grown into this?

And who could that be in bed? A sick man, for the evidences of sickness were there in plenty. Curiosity and awe had overmastered fear now; he stole to the bed, sat down in a chair beside it, and watched, wondering, till the sick man should turn his face towards him, feeling that when he did so this wonderful riddle would be read.

He did not wait many minutes. Sir George Hillyar turned uneasily towards him, and recognised him, and Samuel saw the word "death" written on his face.

We are strange, contradictory creatures!—the highest and the lowest of us: David—David, King of Israel, I mean, not the painter—and Marat. Call it a truism; it is none the less true. When this wretched scoundrel saw his old master dying here miserably, before his years were ripe, a purer and nobler sentiment warmed his rotten old heart, and showed itself in those darkened little windows of his eyes, than had place in him since he had knelt at his mother's knee. Deep, deep pity. It bore no lasting fruit; the man died as he had lived—for amendment seems to become an impossibility after a certain point, at least in this world. But, though the spring got choked up once more, still it *had* welled up, and shown that there was water beneath the soil.

The history of the soul of a thorough-going rascal like Samuel Burton "remains to be written." We can't do it; we can only describe the outside of such, and say what we saw them do under such and such circumstances, as we have done with Samuel Burton. As for what they think, feel, and believe, they lie so horribly and habitually that the chances are ten to one that every other word they speak is false. Samuel Burton's character has been sketched after long and intimate confidences with many convicts. I used at one time to make after a new convict as I would after a new butterfly, and try—hopeless task!—to find out when he was lying and

when he was telling the truth. The result has been Samuel Burton. But I have, at all events, found out two things. The first is that a man who has just told you with infinite glee about the share he had in robbing a church, will invariably deny, with virtuous indignation, that he had any share whatever in the crime for which he was transported. His brother always did *that*; and his wife, in a moment of misplaced confidence, received the stolen property into the house in a basket of greens, which was found standing on the sink when the "traps" came. And the second is that, until we can catch a thorough-bred scoundrel, with high literary ability, and strict regard to truth, we had better not talk too fast about the reformation of criminals.

But I can only say that the case of Samuel Burton was just as I have stated it. Sir George and he recognised one another at once, but Sir George spoke first.

"Is it you in the flesh, or are you but another dream?"

"It is I, Sir George, and I am deeply grieved to find you here, and so ill. But cheer up, sir, we will set you right in no time, sir. You must come over to Stanlake, and get about, sir. You will soon be well."

"I am dying, Samuel. I have been going too hard, harder than ever; and you know how hard *that* is! Whence have you come?"

"From Australia, Sir George."

"So you were there all the time," said Sir George, evincing a feeble interest. "Well, all that is over; I forgive, and hope to be forgiven. When you know what I have to tell you, you will use your power mercifully."

"I have reason to believe that my power is gone, sir."

"How so?"

"Your brother Erne is dead."

"Poor Erne! Tell me how."

"He died gold-hunting, sir."

"Poor fellow! poor fellow! I wonder if he forgave me?"

"He loved you, Sir George."

"I dare say. I can see many things

now: I would put much to rights if I lived. I dare say he is better off where he is. When I see him I shall tell him the whole business."

"But you are not going to die, Sir George; there are years of life in you yet. Come, sir, you must get well, and we will put things on another footing."

Sir George Hillyar actually laughed. "Why do you go on lying to a dying man, Samuel; you saw death in my face, or you would never have told me that Erne was dead. Morton and Reuben are on the stairs now—I hear them. If Erne is dead, I have strength left to tell them to hand you over to the next policeman for the Stanlake robberies—I holding your circumstantial confession of them."

"You wouldn't do it, Sir George. Come, I know you won't do it. See, time is short; they are coming. I wish I may be struck dead if this ain't the real truth. Mr. Erne is not *known* to be dead, but he is missing. He may have got to some station on the Ovens, or Mitta, or King, hard up, and be staying there. You won't go and beggar your own child, and ruin me at this time of day. The wrong is done, and can't be mended now. Die silent, sir, like a fox. Think of your son, sir."

"How can I die silent, you villain," said poor Sir George, raising himself in bed, "with you here persuading me to leave this miserable world with an act of rascality? I could have done it, I was going to do it, for I don't fear death like you, you hound; but the devil, nay, it may be God, has sent you here to put the whole villany of the matter before me once more, and force me either to ruin my heir Reuben, or to die like a scoundrel, with a crime against poor innocent Erne on my soul. Is he dead or alive? You will soon be either one or the other if you tempt me to rise from this bed and fall upon you."

"I don't know rightly, sir," said Samuel, rising as pale as a sheet. "Strike me blind if I know. I was only begging you to let things go on as they were, and not say anything about the will in my possession, partly because I

am an old man, a poor feeble old man, sir, and partly because I should not like to see your beautiful little angel of a son—I should not like to see that dear child—coming into my hut two months ago, when her ladyship lost herself in the bush, and he came into my poor little place like a praying seraph—because I should not like to see him left with only Stanlake, mortgaged over head and ears—"

Sir George laughed again. "Magnificent bathos," he said. "So you have seen my wife and child, hey? But, oh, most strangely complicated liar, I was not thinking of that poor little brat, but of my dear devoted son and heir, Reuben."

"Reuben?"

"Yes, Reuben. That poor fool deceived us all. Curse you, I am not going into all that horrible business again on your death-bed. Have some decency. You did not know that I was married in Scotland."

"I did not accompany you to Scotland, sir."

"No. Even in my wickedness I had grace enough left to leave you behind. The new atmosphere was at all events purer than the old. But who did?"

"Young Ben, the keeper's son from the Wiltshire farms, went with you, sir—her ladyship's brother."

"And do you know who is lying on that sofa?—Ben, old fellow, get up; I want some lemonade."

The giant rose up, and Samuel was puzzled no more. He knew him now, poor drunken Uncle Ben. "I will get you your drink, Sir George, if you will allow me," he said. And Sir George said, "Never mind, Ben; lie down again"—which Uncle Ben did.

"He was so awfully like Mr. Erne when he was asleep that I was puzzled," said Samuel. "Now, Sir George, let us have a little quiet talk about this delusion of yours."

"Delusion! It is shared among others by Compton, who considers the legal evidence quite sufficient. I married her in Scotland. I never told you that—Reuben is my legitimate son—She

concealed the fact from Morton— She never believed herself really married, and I hardly thought that such a farce could be binding in law. But she many times voluntarily told Ben the whole truth, and left a witnessed statement. It is no use to fight against facts, you know. You may fight, but in six hours Reuben will be in possession of Stanlake. And, if Erne is dead, of the rest."

It seemed so very consistent and so very like truth that Samuel felt it must be true. The best cards were all in his adversary's hand, and his adversary had shown him his cards, careless whether he won or lost. Poor Samuel had but three ways of playing—threatening, lying, and whining; and now he tried the last, not because he dreamt of its succeeding—for so stony-hearted is the world that he had never found it do any good whatever—but because—because— Well I do not know why; they always do it. Detect a liar for yourself; wait till the impudent defiant fit is over, and he begins to whine, and then ask him what he expects to gain by it. If he cannot tell you, I am sure I cannot.

"Are you going to have no mercy on a poor broken old man, Sir George? Are you going to take my boy from me, and leave me no one to comfort and console me on the way to my miserable grave?"

"Yes," said Sir George, angrily. "I wish to be at peace."

Samuel rose, for Morton and Reuben were in the room. He went and talked to them while Sir George Hillyar was sleeping; and after a time Mr. Compton came in, and the whole miserable business was talked through between him, Uncle Ben, Mr. Compton, and Morton. He saw that the proofs were overwhelming, and after a time went and sat by himself, feeling, poor dog, more unutterably lonely, deserted, and miserable than he had ever felt in his life.

He sat awake all night. Towards morning, when Mr. Compton had gone, and the other three were asleep, he heard Sir George move, and instantly went towards him. Sir George's face

was calmer now, and even kind; he stretched out his hand to Samuel, and said,

"Let us forgive one another. We have both to receive punishment, but my mind is not such a shifting quicksand as yours, and I think I see that I am the most to blame. We have both fallen, I cannot quite see why or how, into a horrible pitfall of moral evil; or, to put it more truly, I, with the strongest nature, fell, and dragged you with me. You, my poor Samuel, don't know truth from falsehood, or right from wrong; I doubt if you ever did. I have always seen the difference, and in consequence have made such a hell of this world that I have some idea—some notion— But I have nothing to go upon, except my own possibly distorted notions of justice. What matters it my speculating? I shall soon be in possession of facts. I see—I mean, I feel—one thing: that I wish to forgive and be forgiven; and so I tell you that I have been seeking your life these two years. Can you forgive that?"

"Yes! yes! But you are not going to die! You could not be dying, and speak so calm as this!"

"My throat is even now choking. The effort of breathing in my next sleep will wake me, and you will hear me rattling, and I shall die—probably without speaking. Say all you have to say now."

"But are you not afraid, sir? Is it not terrible to die?"

"What on earth can there be to be afraid of? The future is doubtful, certainly—the sooner over the better. But it *must* come sooner or later."

"Certainly, sir; but the act of dying—I beg pardon. I have to say to you, sir, that whatever I have to forgive is freely forgiven. And," continued Samuel, in a burst of emotion, really at the moment heartfelt, though possibly somewhat out of place, "you have much to forgive also. But tell me, sir, what I am to do about this will?"

"I don't know," said Sir George Hillyar; "I can't decide a question between morality and sentiment on my

deathbed. It depends on whether Erne is dead or no. I don't know what it depends on. I thought you were very fond of Reuben."

"So I was, sir. But what is Reuben to me now?"

"Then you never loved him for his own sake. There is no doubt of his paternity. I did."

He was silent after this for some time, and Samuel thought he was asleep. But after a few minutes he roused up, and said again, "Is all forgiven?" And Samuel said, "All, sir." And then he fell asleep.

Samuel sat watching him till near six, and then he roused the others. Sir George was right as to the result, though wrong as to the cause. There was no rattling in his throat. The cold morning air found its way to his drink-rotted lungs, and they ceased to crepitate. He woke, sighed, and died.

## CHAPTER LXXI.

### REUBEN'S TEMPTATION.

SIR REUBEN HILLYAR and old Morton made much of Samuel, and explained to him the circumstance of his being there. After some time Morton and Uncle Ben left, and Reuben and Samuel were alone together.

"Can we go anywhere and have some conversation together, Sir Reuben?" said Samuel.

It was the first time he had been called by his title, and he started. He proposed that they should go to a room over the way, and so they went.

It was an exceedingly awkward interview. Samuel sat with his head buried in his hands, and did not speak. Reuben had to begin.

"I am afraid you feel this very keenly. I was shocked at first at our change of relationship, for you were very kind to me. I thank you for all your kindness to me, and shall always remain fond of you."

Still no answer. Reuben saw that the old man was crying, and spoke to him still more gently.

"I am very sorry that we should have to separate, but I fear that it would not be safe for you to remain in England. Your company was always pleasant to me, even when it involved danger."

"We never had one word together, Reuben—had we?" said Samuel, who had now found his voice.

"Never one," said Reuben. "I fear you must have thought me unkind in not communicating with you lately, but he had persuaded me of all this long before Uncle Ben came to Sir George to unbosom himself about what my mother had told him, and to ask his advice. That was the reason of my silence. I could not write to you, 'my dear father,' could I?"

"I was right, then, in thinking that it was his doing," said Samuel. "It is lucky for all of us that he did not provoke me to do something which I had it in my power to do—very lucky. If I had been aggravated into putting Erne on the throne, I should have been sorry for it now."

Reuben, not understanding what he meant, and hearing Erne's name, said,

"And so poor Erne is dead?"

"Don't you be so sure of that, my—Sir Reuben. Don't be too sure of that. You may find yourself a beggar yet."

"How so?"

"Like this, my dear sir. The late Sir George Hillyar—your grandfather I am alluding to—made a will, by which he left 8,000*l.* a year to Mr. Erne, and only Stanlake and 2,000*l.* to your father. If Mr. Erne were not dead,—and, if you press me hard, I don't think he is,—the production of that will would ruin you, would it not?"

"I suppose it would. Well?"

"That will is in my possession," whispered Samuel eagerly. "I stole it. Ha! ha! What do you think of that? Stole it."

"I hope you will give it up."

"It ruins you. Do you see? Silence! Was that any one coming? Here it is. Take it; there is the fire, do you see? blazing high. Be quick; it will soon be over."

The old man actually drew the will

from his breast pocket, and put it—with his long thin fingers trembling while he grudgingly relinquished the terrible power which he had held so long—into Reuben's hand. Reuben took it and looked at it, saying,

"Well, this beats everything. This is actually the will, is it? Well, it's a nuisance, but it can't be helped. I must drop my title and emigrate, I suppose." So saying, he put the will in his breast and buttoned his coat over it.

"Put it in the fire, you fool," said old Samuel, clutching Reuben's arm with his long fingers; "put it in the fire, or I'll tear it away from you again. If you were to meet with an accident and that was found on you, you'd be transported."

"It shan't be on me long," said Reuben. "It shall be in Mr. Compton's hands in an hour."

"I'll tear it from you!" said Samuel. "You daren't—you won't—hit an old man like me. And I'll tear it out of your heart if you don't give it to me. Damn you, do you think I am going to sit by and see my game thrown to the four winds like this? I gave it to you from pure love, and now you are going to do justice with it! Do you think I perilled my life and my immortal soul to have justice done? Confound you, I'll have it back again. I'll tear it out of your heart, you false, ungrateful lad. Give it up!"

The old man threw himself on to Sir Reuben, and plucked at the breast of his coat. But Reuben laid his strong hand quietly on the old man's breast, and merely said, "Steady; steady, dad. Remember, for God's sake what the effect of a row would be here, and now!"

Samuel was quiet in an instant. He sat down and began another line of action, far more dangerous to Reuben than any amount of violence would have been.

He waited a little before he began. At last he said,—

"It's a fine thing to be a baronet."

"I suppose so," said Reuben; "but I haven't thought about it yet. I haven't realized my position."

"I'd sooner," said Samuel, with a

thoughtful expression, "for my part, be a sweep, or what is worse, a cooper—nay a nightman, than be a Bart. without property."

Reuben said, "Ah!"

"You have no prestige. Nobody cares for a Bart. If you were a lord, with a seat in the Upper House, that's another thing. Your order would take care of you. I believe there's a fund for poor Lords. But a Bart! Lord! the things I've seen poor Barts. drove to. Some of them goes on the stage for a time, till the public are sick of 'em. Some of them billiard-marks; all of them trades on their title, and takes to drink. There is no place for a broken-down Bart. under heaven; and that's what you are unless you put that paper in the fire."

No particular effect on Reuben; at least, no answer.

"Ah, how bitterly you'll find that out in a year's time, with nothing but Stanlake, and Erne's claims upon it! Why, if he presses his claim, you are a ruined and miserable man: and it is not too late to alter it, even yet."

Poor Reuben began to look haggard and thoughtful. Who can blame him that in the first flush of his new fortunes he had looked forward with delighted anticipation to the splendid future? He had built already a grand edifice of fancy for himself; and here sat old Samuel, with his cowering face half turned upwards towards him, inexorably, with infinite dexterity, pulling it down about his ears; and yet reminding him that he still held in his hand the power of rebuilding it in one instant. He began to get very unhappy. Samuel saw that he was producing an effect, and changed his tune with infinite knowledge of his man.

"But don't let us talk any more of this. There's a bright future before you; and, if Mr. Erne is alive, you may make it up to him."

"Is he alive, or is he not?" said Reuben impatiently. "One time you say one thing, and at another time another."

"He is alive sure enough," said



Samuel. "But listen to me. Do you know all the pleasures of ten thousand a year, lad? Have you ever thought of them? Have you ever thought of what you are giving up? Why, your position, in case of your not making a fool of yourself, will be one of the most enviable in the whole world. Think of what it is to be a country gentleman, and how well you are suited for it. There's your horses and dogs now; and what's to prevent your taking the Vine hounds into your own hands, declining subscriptions, and making a king of yourself? Or your horses, once more! Is there anything against Sir Reuben Hillyar owning a Dutchman or a Voltigeur, having his share in the maddest five minutes of the year—ay, and coming out the envied of England? Boy, boy! you have heard them coming over the grass, four or five of them together, so close that you might lay a tablecloth over them. You know that maddening music, do you? Why, I am an old man, but it sends the blood buzzing and tingling into my ears even now when I think of it. Don't say I haven't hit you there; for I saw your eye kindle; you are a born sportsman. And Morton says you are shooting beautifully. Ah, dear! those woodcocks in the hollies: it takes a man for them."

Reuben said, "Well; have you done?"

"The girls, the lasses, the ladies, hey," continued old Samuel, as though he hadn't heard him. "The real ladies. The carefully educated women, ugly or pretty—the women formed by the traditions of a dozen generations of refinement. You fool; do you know what you are throwing away by cutting yourself off from all hopes of coming near them? I do. I was brought up among them, and used to watch their ways; and the recollection of them used to make the hulks, and the prison, and the wretched pothouse life into which I was driven, a hell to me; for I was born for a gentleman. Haven't I waited on them; and don't I know how the very plainest of them gets, from the

very air in which she lives, a grace and a refinement—a power of fascination which no girl in our rank of life can even understand? I know this; and you——"

Reuben rose. "How many of them are like Emma Burton?" he said. "How many of them would have followed me to the den to which you led me, and have saved me at the risk of her life? She is my model of a woman, and I want none better. She always led me from evil, and showed me good. If Erne is dead, my life and fortune shall be devoted to taking his place, so help me God. She may forget him in time; and I may grow worthy of her in time. It is that glorious girl's influence," continued he, snarling in his speech, as his cockney, *poco curante* etiquette broke down under stress of circumstances, "that enables me to tell you that what you wish me to do is impossible, for that, if I did it, I should never dare to look upon her face again."

They spoke no more together. Before the silence had become awkward, Mr. Compton's voice was heard outside, inquiring for Sir Reuben Hillyar. Reuben went out to him, and taking the will from his breast pocket, held it out to him, smiling.

"Do you know this paper?" he said.

"Good God!" said Compton. "It is your grandfather's will. I know it well enough, for I drew it up. It is the will that couldn't be found. How on earth did you come by it? You must have stronger faith in Erne's death than I have, from that miserable old liar's account, or you would have put it in the fire. Where on earth has it been?"

"It has been on its travels," said Sir Reuben, pointing over his shoulder towards the room where Samuel Burton still sat. "Lady Hillyar's liver and tan spaniel found it on the floor, and seeing it smelt meaty, being parchement, began gnawing it; when in came her ladyship's white Persian cat, with her three white kittens, wanting some of it, considering as a mother of three that the assertion of her rights was a sacred



duty. And the dog, conceiving them, from their colour and from the solemnity of their demeanour, to be avenging angels, hooked it up the chimney, and shut the register after him, having forgotten in his guilty terror to let go of the will."

"My dear Sir Reuben!" put in Mr. Compton.

"And," continued Reuben, determined to atone for his late exhibition of earnestness by going into higher flights of nonsense than he had ever attempted heretofore, and rising to the circumstances, "that dog remained in that chimney for four days, sometimes trying to get out at the top, from which he was prevented by the cowl; sometimes attempting, with a perseverance and an intelligence to which the attention of writers on the natural history of the friend of man cannot be called too soon, to raise the register with his fore feet. During all this time the dog, whether terrified by his position, or (as seems more probable) beginning to feel a natural remorse at having abstracted——"

"Now steady, my dear Sir Reuben," put in Mr. Compton. "Never mind where this will have been. We have got it now. That is all."

"Say no more about it," said Reuben. "I will tell you, when it is safe to do so, the story about it. Meanwhile, if it is good in law, let it take effect. If Erne is dead, I will devote half my life to win Emma Burton."

## CHAPTER LXXII

### JAMES BURTON'S STORY.

AND so poor Erne was dead! Noble, affectionate Erne Hillyar, who had lit down among all the commonplace squalor of Chelsea, and had made friends with me above all other lads, and had taught me to love him also—he was dead. The fate which seemed to hang over the two houses whenever they were brought together had stooped down once more. He had fallen in love with my sister; and she, refusing him

through a foolish overstrained sense of duty, had made him desperate, and he had gone south and was dead.

I was not angry with her about it. I thank God now that I never blamed her; I loved her too well for that, and I felt, I think, in a less degree every arrow of grief which went through her heart. When, after the third day, she fled to me—to me of all others—for comfort, I took her to my heart and felt something like a gleam of sunshine. Though I had persuaded her, almost bullied her to forego her silly resolution, yet she loved me above all others yet. I knew that she did not fly to me because I had loved him who was dead best of living men, and was the more likely to talk of him. I was quite sure of that, and I think I am so now. No: on consideration I am certain she came to me, because she loved me for my own sake, better than all the world, now that he was gone.

In the old days when I used to go courting Martha by Clerkenwell Prison, where we used to get the omnibus and go out to Hampstead Heath and wander all day, hand-in-hand, among the furze-bushes, until the time came for her to go back to her hideous drudgery, we two intensely-happy fools used to talk about this Erne Hillyar, until Martha believed in him like a god. She believed in me to an immense extent, and does so still, I think. I think that at this very time she has a lurking belief that I not only found the copper-mine, but made the copper and put it there ready to be found, and that consequently she looks on the copper-works as a triumph of sagacity on her part, in having selected me to keep company with in the old times when I was only a blacksmith's apprentice. She believed in Erne, from my account of him, as some one who moved in a higher sphere than ours, possessed of qualities to which we could never attain. Her mother had taught her, either before her Catechism, or else with such remarkable emphasis, that the Catechism sank into insignificance, that gentlemen were wolves and scoundrels, and that she was never to

say anything more to a gentleman than yes or no. But she had never considered Erne to be a gentleman. She went about with me during our courtship on that very question. "You profess to love him," she said, "and call him *that*." I was obliged to keep the fact of Saint Erne being a gentleman in the background.

When that pretty cracked little Lady Hillyar came wandering to our house, asking to be taken care of, Emma brightened up a little, and accepted her work cheerfully; she went south again and left me alone in my grief. I say comparatively alone, for I think that my wife's grief was mainly for me; and I tried to hide it from her as much as possible. I could not bear the anxious look that came in that dear face when she saw me moping and brooding, or those pitiful offerings up of the baby, to be kissed, at the shrine of her love. Dear soul, she did not know what to say to comfort me; but she had found the baby a sovereign remedy for every small vexation in her own case, and so she used to administer it to me whenever my head went down upon my hands, and my face grew vacant as my mind wandered off after what might have been. Baby was very well for a few minutes; but it was too young to talk, and was generally given back to its mother, who stood with anxious eyes watching the father's face. God bless thee, wife! Summer and winter come and go; the storm rattles over head, and goes crashing and booming away towards the mountains, and leaves a sky of cloudless blue behind it from horizon to zenith; but thy love has never waxed or waned, neither in gingham and woollen, nor, as we are now, in brocade and diamonds.

I suspect that, if I hadn't been brought up a blacksmith, I should have been something else, provided I had brains enough; on which last point I am not sure, but on which my family seemed to have satisfied themselves in the negative; though why they always come to me about all questions, which any brains of better quality than those of a — well

— could have settled in a moment, I am at a loss to conceive. I suspect also that there is some of the poetical faculty about me (hitherto strictly latent), because I am accustomed to walk out of nights, when anything goes wrong.

I took to doing this now, because I was in really deep distress about Erne, and because I found that these long night-walks made me sleep soundly, until the time came for me to get up and go to the mine. Men at twenty-one can do with wonderfully little sleep, and an amazing deal of work. You see there is so much more phosphorus in the brain then, or something of that kind.

And again, although I had intended these night-walks of mine to be solitary walks in which I might think over the memory of him who was gone, yet it was perhaps fortunate for me that my humour was not allowed to have its course. I soon had a companion.

Trevittick was a man who scorned to do anything like any one else, and he kept up his character on this occasion. Knowing what an affectionate nature he really had beneath his quaint shell, and knowing how deeply he had attached himself to poor Tom Williams, I dreaded the burst of grief which would ensue when he heard of his death, not only on account of his loss here, but because I felt sure that Trevittick would, like a thorough *Heautontimoroumenos*, torture himself with some insane speculation on the probable destiny of poor Tom's soul. What was my astonishment at his receiving the news with a burst of thanksgiving, and at his going about his work that day with an air of pious cheerfulness. I really did not know whether to laugh, or to be provoked at, this new vagary of his. But, in the evening, my curiosity to know in what way he would account for his conduct, in what light he would put the matter before his strangely-distorted mind, overcame my manners, and I asked him to explain.

He scornfully doubted if a person so dead to higher religious life as I was capable of understanding his explanation.

I simply said I would try.

He then said that he had every reason to believe that Tom, though unawakened, was elect; that the elect who died before their awakening, entered into glory, into a higher destiny than was possible for us; for they were awakened in bliss unutterable, whereas we must wait and wander, and fall and rise, and only afar off—

Here the poor fellow completely broke down. The outward exhibition of his grief was as wild and fierce as his self-command had been wonderful. It was a long time before that powerful mouth could set itself once more, still longer before I ceased to detect a fluttering of the lip when he spoke.

He was very angry with himself and with me about this outbreak. On the very next occasion, which occurred immediately, he "gave it to me" in right good earnest. I, speaking from my heart, and thinking in some way to comfort him, said,—

"Poor Tom Williams!—poor dear Tom!"

He fired up immediately. He said I was blaspheming, to apply the epithet "poor" to a saint in glory. He said I was as bad as a miserable idiot of an old woman at a funeral, who in one breath would speak of the deceased as being happy in heaven, and in the next would "poor dear" him and begin howling. I took his rebuke in my usual ox-like manner, and, moreover, did not laugh—which I somehow felt inclined to do—at the quaint mixture of sentimentality, shame of that sentimentality, fanaticism, and logical thought which he showed; and which, combined with extravagance and avarice in about equal portions, and a "clannishness"—a belief in Cornwall and things Cornish—before which the Scotticism of Professor Blackie shows like a feeble, half-developed instinct, make up the character of that strange race who live beyond the Tamar, and many of whom are about as much like Englishmen as the Samoeyses.

I only went for one walk alone, and then he found me out. The next time

I started he was waiting for me, and I was glad of his company, for the weather was deadly still, dull, and sultry, and there was no movement in the forest; except sometimes the distant crack and crash of a falling bough; and now and then, while the blood-red moon hung overhead, the wild wail of a native dog, like the feeble cry of a dying child; which faded away into silence, and left the hot oppressiveness of the forest more unbearable than before. It was not well to walk alone in the forest at midnight that summer.

We never made any arrangement as to where we should walk; but our feet, by some tacit, unexpressed instinct, always carried us the same way, almost to the same spot—southward, to the summit of the Cape Wilberforce Mountain, where we could look over the sleeping forest, stretched out beneath the lurid moon, towards Victoria, the land where our unburied loved ones lay dead.

I used to talk but little. I was unable, either by education or intellect, to hold my own with Trevittick in argument. He alone talked. He talked to me a great deal, but I soon found that he was talking to himself—was using me as a "Speaker," as a man set there for him to put his cases to, like the personages in Plato's dialogues, put up to be demolished; as a man to whom he might without personality vent his strange theories about God's dealings with man—theories got principally from the Old Testament, which he had, as it were, eaten raw, without any salt of scholastic divinity whatever, and which had consequently disagreed with him terribly, and sometimes nearly driven him mad. In some of his moods he would claim that there was a higher law, which we were incapable of understanding—a law which set aside our notions of human morality; in another, that the deepest and most subtle lesson which the Old Testament taught was that morality was unnecessary to understanding God, which was the only object of life: nay, more, that it was a stumbling-block set before our feet by the fiend. This he would illustrate by such

questions as that of the assassination of tyrants ; in such a temper, too, as made me feel certain that, if Cardinal Wiseman ever did preach in Westminster Abbey, and Trevittick happened to be among the congregation, his Eminence would meet with an accident, and one of the best preachers in England would preach no more. At another time maintaining, and uncommonly well, that the right of taking human life was taken from man the morning when Christ was born. Such a mass of rambling, confused thought was never yet put before a half-educated man as Trevittick put before me during these midnight walks ; and the man was so clever, and so amazingly eloquent too, that he dragged me triumphantly at the wheels of his chariot, and fully persuaded me of each of his theories in succession ; until, sometimes, coming home in the morning, as the ghastly red sun had risen, and left the moon hanging overhead with a sickly, pale face, as of an obstinate ghost who had refused to depart at cockerow, I used to deliberate whether or no Baby himself, lying with his tender fingers tangled in my wife's hair, was not an invention of the fiend, sent to lure me to my destruction.

Heaven defend me from having that Weather and that Man sent to me at the same time again ! I should go mad. I could possibly, having the constitution of an ox, pull through either separately ; but both together. Bah ! I can make no more fun for you, reader. If you want any more of that, shut up the book here, and say good bye. But these midnight walks with him had a strange, unhealthy fascination for me in my present state of mind ; and I continued them.

One night we sat together on the summit of the mountain. The stillness had grown stiller, and the heat had got more intense ; the blessed sea itself, the fresh restless changing sea, was now merely a dull gleaming sheet of copper beneath the blurred and ragged moon ; there was no sound in the long-spread forest, for the rivers were silent in the horrible unnatural heat, and the native

dogs were crouched in their lair, urged by an instinct of fear more delicate than our own.

We sat on the grass with our hats off, and our throats bare, for some time without speaking ; at last I said,

"After all you have said on both sides, Trevittick, you have left me with a confused idea that there is some injustice in the death of Erne and Tom Williams. They were so good and so innocent. What had they done to deserve such a horrible fate ?"

We sat without speaking for some time after this. I knew I had offended Trevittick. For him to find all his high-wrought teaching traversed by a commonplace remark of this kind would, I knew, make him angry. But, God forgive me, I felt what I said. It did seem to me so very, very hard.

I cannot say how long the silence lasted, but suddenly we moved closer together, and tried to seize one another's hands in the dark. For down in the south, among the dim, still forest ranges, we heard the first low muttering of an approaching earthquake.

The sound of it changed from a dull muttering into an angry snarl, and then into a confused jarring roar ; but, before it reached us, it had passed into silence, and had only left strange humming echoes in the hot heavy air. The vast mass of trap rock on which we sat, crossing the crack in the earth at right angles had stopped it. We looked hurriedly towards Port Romilly ; the ramparts of Cape Wilberforce had saved the town. The few lights burning burnt as steadily as ever.

After a time Trevittick spoke. "The heathenish nonsense you were talking," he said, "before the Lord rebuked you by shaking the solid earth under your feet, arises from this error,—that the world is the place of rewards and punishments. That is a lie of the devil's. If you believe that, you cannot at the same time believe in the justice of God. You have seen one instance in proof of it, and have rebelled against that. Mind lest God send you another and more terrible one."

I remembered his words afterwards.

"The best man ever I knew was burnt to death, and died in horrible agonies, trying to save a widow's house. You lay *that* to your heart; else when the time comes you will most bitterly repent it."

## CHAPTER LXXIII.

### THE OMEO DISASTER.

POOR ERNE! His troubles had very quickly begun. By the time he reached the lake, he was quite blind with sand-blight, and unable to do anything. It was only by degrees that the light broke in upon him, and then the blazing of the great sheets of snow which hung in horizontal lines, or rolled up into gentle curves, round three quarters of the horizon, made him fain to shut them again.

He found that busy Tom Williams had pitched their tent in the deep shade of a group of lightwood trees, on a rising ground overlooking the lake, which began about a hundred and fifty yards from them, and stretched away for five-and twenty miles through the beautiful broken country of intermingled forest and lawn, hill and valley which surrounded it. Around on all sides were dark forest-clad mountain ramparts, and above it all the aerial snow downs, traversed continually with purple shadows of flying summer clouds.

Here they stayed and worked pleasantly enough for a long while. There was gold about in all directions, very fine, but tolerably abundant. They put up troughs on a little stream of water and washed the earth; it was pleasant cool work, by no means laborious.

There were but few incidents. It got to be a habit with them to watch the snow. To Tom Williams it would have been snow only; nay, less than snow, only white hills, had he not been with Erne. To the last, I believe, his London *nil admirari* mind hardly appreciated the fact of its really being real cold snow. But there were white hills, and Erne said

they were snow, and showed him the beauty of them. Tom noticed that at evening, when the glaring white had turned to a blazing crimson which Mr. Sidney Percy himself could scarcely paint, the light of it was reflected in Erne's face, as he sat in the door of the tent, and gave it an artificial flush. And Tom noticed too that, when some travelling thunderstorm would rise up, like the eruption of a volcano, violet-black, out of Gippsland, enfold the side of one of the snow downs, and begin tearing at it with continuous snatching claws of lightning, then Erne's face would light up once more, his big eyes would stare, and his handsome mouth would open—only for a time though, Tom was sorry to see. When the thunder-storm had gone rattling away southward, or when the south wind had come rushing up in his strength, and after a few feeble thunder crackles had dissolved the whole terrible and dangerous combination into thin air, till only one pinnacle of the great ruin hung floating in the sky, disappearing while you looked on it—then Tom Williams noticed that the old weary look came back into Erne's face, and the eyelids would half close over the eyes, and the mouth would shut once more.

Of course Erne was not long before he made a confidant of Tom Williams. It might be indiscreet; but then Tom Williams knew the whole business from beginning to end, and had known it a long time before Erne ever opened his mouth. It is very quaint, the way "the principal party" comes and solemnly tells you in a whisper, with suspicious glances at the door, what one heard a moiety of the assembled county discuss and shelve, at the Pacha's dinner-table, a week ago last Friday. However, Tom Williams heard the story all over again very many times with the most extreme complacency. "*Toujours perdrix*" is no motto for children or sailors, or the majority of the labouring class. "Let us have 'Little Red Ridinghood' to-night, Miss Piminy," or "Pitch us that yarn about the young man as cut the young woman's throat



and buried her in the sawpit," is the sort of demand generally made on the story-teller of the evening in the nursery, the forecastle, or the public-house. New stories require frequent repetition to give them the stamp of authenticity. And the "child-mind" is eminently Tory, and suspicious of all fiddle-faddle not believed in by their grandmothers, unless, as in a few instances, it runs into a kind of rampant fiendish whiggery, and asks questions, in which case it must be slapped and put to bed, or the very thunders of Convocation themselves will pass overhead as idle words. Tom Williams was not in the least bored by hearing what he had heard fifty times before. I remember that, as children, we used to demand every night for a long period, at Dieppe, the history of the young lady who used to lose her temper at dominos.

Erne was passionately fond of shooting, and with a view to sport had brought up a large store of gunpowder. All the week they would work, and on Sunday would be away in the forest, or round the lake, shooting,<sup>1</sup> getting quantities of wild duck, snipe, quail, and plover. And so the time passed away pleasantly enough, and they got no richer and no poorer, and they were never much too cold or much too hot; and the sun rose and set, and northed in the winter, and came south again in summer, and all things went so smooth and easy that months seemed like years, and Erne began to feel as though there were no real world beyond those snow-downs. There had been once, but there was none now. His reason told him that all his old friends were alive and well; yet in his memory the image of James Burton was scarcely more distinct than that of his father. Emma stood by herself still. His intellect would have gone nearly to sleep had it not been for occasional fierce fits of furious jealousy against some unknown man or another,

who might be in her company at Palmerston.

Nearly everybody left the place once, to go to Reid's Creek, some 160 miles off, where gold was being found in amazing abundance. There were hardly a hundred people left, and they had such a queer, quiet time of it. Mails were few and far between, and newspapers consequently irregular. The little colony was thrown upon its own resources, and managed wonderfully well. Every one knew every one else, and all called one another by their Christian names. The ladies had their little tiffs. Some's wife fell out with Home's wife about Erne's washing, for instance; for after their dissolution of partnership, Erne being unable, like St. What's-his-name, to divide his one shirt a week between them, tossed up a shilling and gave it to Mrs. Some; whereupon Mrs. Home accused her of soda, and even their husbands did not speak for a fortnight. And sometimes, too, a couple of dogs would fall out; but the general unanimity was wonderful.

This agreeable state of things was rudely disturbed by Tom Williams and Erne. They moved a small granite boulder in the channel of the stream where they were working, and found in a crevice below about three handfuls of black sand, out of which they washed a pound weight of gold. The news reached Beechworth, of course, in an exaggerated form, and the consequence was that diggers came flocking over in hundreds.

The approaches to Lake Omeo are of fearful difficulty. The men came on foot or horseback, but the approach with drays in this burning summer time was exceedingly difficult; the men were there before the provisions, and the consequence was a disastrous retreat, in which the loss of life must have been very great. How great it was we shall never know, but it must have been very great. A man who came into Beechworth on Christmas eve informed me that he himself had found eight young men dead by the Mitta Mitta.

Just as the panic began Erne fell ill. They had no immediate cause for alarm

<sup>1</sup> What an extraordinary fiction it is, that there is no sporting in Australia! The sport there is far better than any which was obtained by Mr. Grantley Berkeley in America, if you leave out his buffalo-shooting.



at first, having a considerable quantity of stores by them ; but Erne's illness grew so obstinate that Tom Williams began to get anxious. He never thought of himself. If any one had spoken to him about deserting Erne, Tom would have "pitched into him." He was perfectly willing to stay there and die with Erne, but he was getting anxious, more for Erne's sake than his own. What strange tales one reads of the devotion of men towards one another at such times as these. Read the history of Burke and Wills's expedition. When you read of Wills (last and not least of Devon's worthies) dismissing Burke and King, lest they should lose their lives in seeing him die—when you find that Wills sent these two men from him, and chose a hideous, lonely death, sooner than keep them by him till their last hope of safety was cut off—then you get into a clear high atmosphere of tragedy.

Tom Williams stayed by Erne, patient, gentle, and careful to the last—believing that in doing so he was cutting off his only hope of safety. He saw their provisions dwindling day by day ; he saw Erne getting weaker day by day ; but he sat on and talked cheerfully about old times and people, and he talked the more about them because he began to be fully persuaded that he should never see them again. Erne's beautiful temper made it easier for him ; but to sit all day in a scorching tent, as the summer settled down over the land like a furnace, watching starvation stalking on towards you,—this was a hard fate for one who was only there by an act of unselfish devotion.

One afternoon Tom, who had not left Erne before that day, went out to talk to one of the few neighbours who were left. Their tents were mostly standing, and he looked into one after another. There was nobody in any one of them. The place was quite silent. He began to feel like a child in a dark room—he began to feel the awful terror of solitude, the terror which expresses itself by hurried glances over the shoulder. He shouted aloud, but the echo of his voice came rattling back to him from among

the tree stems. There was no other answer, not even the bark of a dog. The last of the men had gone, and the dogs had followed them ; and poor dying Erne and he were left alone together by the solitary lake, three thousand feet above the sea, and one hundred and sixty miles from the voices of their fellow-men.

Erne had one priceless treasure. He had his "In Memoriam." And, although he knew most of it by heart, yet he loved to see the glorious words on the page, for old fellowship's sake ; for they were dear to him. One night he fell asleep while he was reading it, and, when Tom awoke, he saw that Erne was awake too, and reading again.

"Tom," he said ; "I dreamt of my mother last night."

Tom bowed his face in his hands.

"You know what that means ?"

Tom knew too well, but said nothing.

"I must die, you see. There is no doubt about it. Now you must make me one solemn promise."

Tom promised him.

"You must take the gun and powder and shot, and try to make Snake Valley. You must leave me."

Tom swore a great oath, which he had no business to do ; but then he was a low born, ignorant fellow.

"You promised," said Erne.

"And I'm going to break my promise. Let's hear no more about it. You are insulting me."

That weary day passed on, and Erne seemed no worse. Just at sunset there came towards the tent, a very wan, lean, wizened little old man, all alone.

"Why, daddy," exclaimed Tom Williams, "we thought you was gone ! Where have you been this week ?"

"I've been down with the old complaint, and, Lord bless you, I was all alone, and near dying, for I couldn't find my remedy.<sup>1</sup> And I lay a week, and was just giving up yesterday when I bethought me it might have dropped behind the bed. And, praise God, there it was, and I am all right this morning, but dreadful weak. Where's the young gentleman ?"

<sup>1</sup> Probably opium and catechu.

"The young gentleman's down with the same complaint. And, God help me," said Tom, with the first burst of tears he had hitherto indulged in, "he's dying!"

"What have you give him?"

"I haven't had anything to give him. Nothing's any good now."

The old man made a gesture of impatience. "Cut away to my tent," he said, "for your legs are nimbler than mine; and look under the head of my bed-place, and you will find an old galvanized iron bucket. And at the top of the bucket you will find a lot of *Melbourne Arguses*, and a pair of gold scales; and take them out careful. And below that you will find a parcel done up in a Sacramento paper; you needn't open that, there's naught in it but a quartz specimen and a Arrapahoe scalp, as I give six dollars for to one of the pony express; but take it out careful. And then you'll come to a old Bible, and leave that out, young man, for I want it again: I mind of it's being uncommon useful twenty-two year ago. And below the Bible you'll find a cigar-box; and open that and you'll find a lock of woman's hair done up in a blue riband, and a lock of boy's hair done up in brown riband. The woman's hair is black, and the boy's hair is brown, though that ain't no odds to you, by the bye. But in that same box you will find a paper parcel, and bring it here. The reason I put it there was that I couldn't die without looking into that box, and so the remedy was better there than elsewhere. Bring it here, but don't go no deeper into that bucket. There's nothing but a lot of ballads and love-letters below that."

How quaint that Australian life is—a life's history in an old iron bucket! Not always, however, with another life at the bottom of the bucket, as there was in this case.

The good old man, having ascertained that the worst symptoms had not made their appearance, "exhibited" his remedy, and the symptoms ceased in five hours. There were sufficient provisions left to put Erne on his legs again, and Tom Williams one morning found that

an angel, named Hope, had lit down out of the blazing, brazen sky, and was standing before him with sheeny wings, beckoning westward.

There was something utterly unspeakable in the joy that this young workhouse-bred nobleman felt, when he saw Erne take his gun out and shoot a wood-duck. Hope dawned upon him once more. His self-sacrifice had not been in vain. Here in this scorching, beautiful paradise was death. Beyond, lay sweetheart, friends, and life. Only a hundred and sixty miles between them and Beechworth. Even if he had to carry Erne on his back they *might* do it. They had twelve pounds of flour, some tea, and heaps of powder and shot. Oh for Reuben Burton now! or one of the Shepherds, or one of the Homeses!

As they crossed the great wooded ridge which divided them from the watershed of the Mitta Mitta, they turned and had a last look at the place where they had suffered so much, and which they were never to see again. The lake lay sleeping in the inexorable heat, sometimes dreaming in a fantastic mirage like a nightmare, in which the trees and mountains were horribly inverted. All around, the great snow hills folded in vast ridges; and there was but one living thing in sight. The old man, a mere speck in the vast scenery which seemed rolling in on all sides in towering white waves to overwhelm him—he stood there, poor, weak, feeble, alone; with all the powers of untamed Nature banded against him, solitary among the dreadful mountains.

That was the last of Lake Omeo. That scene photographed itself upon their brains indelibly.

At first, while the new effect of effort and freedom was upon them, they never doubted of the result: they imagined themselves saved. They shot parrots and cooked them, and fared very well. But the ridges were steep to climb, and Erne began to flag; and, when they got into the magnesian limestone country, which lies on the left bank of the Mitta Mitta, the water, drawn away underground into infinite crannies and clefts

of the rock, begun to fail them; and they were forced, will they nill they, to struggle down over the cliffs to the river itself, and fight with the tangled jungle on its brink for very life's sake, sooner than keep the high open leading ranges where walking was so much easier, and where the blessed cool south wind from the pole could fan their foreheads, and tell them that the whole of God's earth was not like this blazing, beautiful, cruel, forest land through which they fought their way.

Similar causes will produce similar effects; and they, starting with just the same knowledge or ignorance of the route to Beechworth as those who had preceded them, found after a little time that they, driven by the same necessities, had too surely followed on their track.

"The bodies and the bones of those  
That strove in other days to pass,  
Are withered in the thorny close  
Or scattered blanching on the grass.  
He gazes on the silent dead—"

Those who try to prove that Shakespeare was an attorney, had better try to prove that Mr. Tennyson brought up the rear of the great Omeo retreat. There is more evidence for Tennyson than for Shakespeare.

One day—who can say which out of so many weary days!—they came upon the bodies of two young men, brothers, whom they had known on the Omeo, lying locked in one another's arms, on a shelf of limestone by the river. They could not go near them, but they recognised them by their clothes. Erne spoke very little after this, and soon after went mad.

He was not morose or troublesome in his madness. He got first incoherent in his talk, and was apt to astonish Tom Williams by tacking one sentence on to another without the slightest notion of cause and effect. But after this his madness began to get really pretty. He began to be really delirious—that is to say, he began to dream without going to sleep, and to tell his dreams as fast as they came—a very great advantage; for we sane idiots forget half ours as

soon as we wake. In short, Erne was talking his dreams as quick as they appeared, and, had there only been a shorthand writer present, we might have had the most wonderful results.

In spite of his madness, though, he walked stoutly onwards. The country through which they walked was one of the richest and most beautiful in the world, but it was not ready for human habitation. It was still in its cruel, pitiless phase. It was only in the state of preparation—a state which it requires generally a great sacrifice of human life to alter into a state of readiness for what we choose to call a state of civilization. It was exceedingly rich, and it looked wonderfully beautiful. Every morning, great inexorable Mother Nature looked over the eastern hill tops, passing through phases of crimson glory into orange glory, until she had done her day's work, and laid all the magnificent landscape to sleep, under a haze of crystalline blue. And then she would sleep herself; and say dreamily, "Children! children! here is room for millions of you. Come." And then in the evening she would wake up once more, into new glories of crimson and purple, and once more fall asleep, into dark night, sighing sometimes, in dry wandering winds, which rustled through the grass upon the thirsty wolds, "Children! children! you have come too soon, and you must die."

The owner of a solitary tent, in one of the furthest and loneliest gulleys at Snake Valley, was lying reading in bed, when he was startled by a shout, to which he answered by another, and an invitation to enter. In a moment a young man stood in the doorway, looking so wan and so wild that the man was startled, and cried out, "Good God, mate, what's the matter?"

"Omeo! water!" was all that Tom Williams could get out. The man was out of bed in a moment, and instantly was making towards the water bucket with a pannikin; but, as Tom's wolfish eyes followed him, and saw where the water was, he dashed past him, and,

with his head in the bucket, drank with long draughts like a horse.

After a fit of giddiness and sickness, he found his voice. "My mate is not three hundred yards back on the track, and I am not sure that he is dead. I carried him the last mile, and laid him down when I saw your light; come, and ——" But the man was gone, and, when Tom came up, he found him trying to pour water between the lips of the unfortunate Erne, who lay beneath the tree where Tom had left him—to all appearance dead.

Dead he was not, though, thanks to Tom Williams. Some may say that death is better than life, on the terms on which Erne enjoyed it for a long time after. But life is life, with all its troubles, and death is practically considered by all parties, creeds, and ages, to be a change for the worse; so I suppose that, "humanly speaking," we ought to congratulate ourselves on the fact that Erne Hillyar wasn't dead, and is not dead yet. He had only succeeded in utterly destroying his constitution.

*To be continued.*

## A FEW WORDS ON THE POPE'S ENCYCLICAL LETTER.

BY F. D. MAURICE.

MUCH has been said about the importance of the Pope's Encyclical Letter. No doubt it is the defiance of forces which have proved themselves mightier than the Papal force when it was mightiest; no doubt it is like the nightmare cry of a worn-out giant, dreaming of the serpents which he strangled in his cradle. But we may repeat these obvious remarks till we lose sight of the immense significance of this document; we may despise what is one of the most striking and critical facts in modern history.

There is apt to be a hard and cruel feeling in the minds of most of us who have been bred in a stern Protestantism, and in whom each year's experience has strengthened and deepened it, towards those who exalt obedience to the Holy See above all the convictions of their reason. It seems to us a form of atheism—a denial that there is an eternal truth before which all creatures must bow. Yet if we examine any special instances of this devotion—such, to take the one nearest our own time, as that of Lacordaire, in surrendering all his strongest political and moral persuasions to the decrees of Gregory XVI.—it is impossible not to recognise

a beauty and a grandeur in the submission. However incomprehensible it may seem to us, we are obliged to ask ourselves what it meant, and how it was compatible with a disposition, in many aspects of it so heroic, as that of the French Dominican. The still more recent utterances of a countryman of Lacordaire, but a statesman and a Protestant, unlike him in all his traditions and all the habits of his intellect, threw a light upon this question which we cannot afford to lose. M. Guizot, the Genevan, sees in the Pope the bond who holds together the fragments of Christendom, who prevents the loose elements of which its faith is composed from absolutely starting asunder. Such a theory from such a man looks like the *reductio ad absurdum* of the doctrinaire philosophy. A fiction—to him nothing more—is necessary to keep God's universe from falling to pieces. But it must be accepted also as a confession from a Protestant of what he has seen to be the feebleness and incoherency of Protestant sects. And it may surely offer the best possible apology for a man educated from infancy to consider the Papacy as the centre of unity to the moral and spiritual universe, if he re-

garded all his own most cherished beliefs, though imparted, as he felt and knew, by God Himself, as nothing in comparison with the acknowledgment of this centre, the assertion of this unity. In this case it was no *doctrinaire* theory; no conception, *ab extra*, of a convenient scheme for making society consist; no patronage of the divine faith and divine order. It was an act of terrible—what would have been to any of us most immoral—sacrifice. But those who at all put themselves into Lacordaire's position, who can look at the world as it appeared to him, though they may tremble even to meditate the contradiction, may reverence him, and wish that in better circumstances they were as truthful as he was.

How deep, how all-possessing, the desire for unity is in our days; how it lies beneath all hearts in all lands; how it manifests itself in all ways—in the best and strongest as well as in the worst and feeblest characters; what bloody offerings it sometimes demands; what torments it inflicts and endures; how it wrestles with the critical spirit in an embrace which may be of love or of hatred, of life or of death—this will be told some day if an historian of our time ever arises who can look through its superficial signs, its apparent discords, to its inmost meaning. He will show how the most opposite sects, associations for the most destructive purposes, betrayed this same instinct; how the most sceptical and scoffing men exhibited the scars of this conflict—their baffled hopes of unity. And therefore any who strove against the Papal hierarchy—so long as it represented the most partial fulfilment of this craving, the mere image of what a centre of unity might be—any who merely complained of it as stifling the demands of the individual conscience, or as an usurpation upon the rights of particular nations—might carry on a moderately prosperous battle against it in the sixteenth century, even when the odds in its favour seemed overwhelming, but have been liable to unaccountable discomfitures even, to de-

feats, in the nineteenth century, when it has seemed to be weakest in its leaders, poorest in its allies.

But what no opponents could do, the Pope has done for himself. That which no Protestants, no unbelievers have succeeded in demonstrating, that the Pope is not the Uniter of Christendom—that he is emphatically its DIVIDER; this he has undertaken himself to demonstrate. Herein lies the unspeakable worth of the late letter. Two reputations had co-existed in the same person. He was accounted the dogmatist of the Christian Church. He was accounted the head and centre of its fellowship. Hitherto the balance between them had been tolerably preserved. Popes had often disturbed it under one impulse or another. But they had seen that, to maintain their last character, the ambition to assert the first needed to be kept in check. Dr. Newman could boast very recently that the decrees and condemnations which have gone forth through a succession of ages had been reluctantly given, and had borne no proportion to the number of questions which had been agitated in Christendom. It seems a frightful irony that the good old man who now fills the chair of St. Peter—the man whose early official years were associated with the ideas of ecclesiastical reformation and Italian unity—should be the Pope who declares, "Henceforth I accept the position of the dogmatist and the denouncer; the other I confess to be absolutely incompatible with it." But this he has done in the series of propositions and denunciations which raise him, the Ultramontane papers affirm, to the level of Hildebrand. They forget their own great claim on behalf of Hildebrand, that, though he set his foot on the neck of kings, he did not care to crush Berengarius. The utmost Pius IX. can do is to ask the Kings for the privilege of cursing some of the strongest convictions of those who are most willing to submit to his authority. The eldest son of the Church refuses that humble petition. He will not give his obolus to Belisarius. Heretical England is not so cruel. If he knows,



being infallible, that he can only curse, she lets him curse over the length and breadth of the land.

It is not, therefore, only with the science, or civilization, or toleration, of this age that the Pope has proclaimed war. He has proclaimed a more deadly war with its longings for unity—that sense of an actual, eternal unity, holding us together in spite of our differences and our hatreds, which has been the great support of his throne when it has been most tottering. It is with the hope of this time, with the deepest, firmest belief, of this time—with the hope and belief of the Roman Catholic, even in one sense more characteristically than of the Protestant countries—that the Pope is at strife. The fiction of M. Guizot is scattered to the winds—that is a reason for almost unmixed joy. The ground for the obedience of such men as Lacordaire was is cut from under them; that change one cannot think of without a mixture of dread. But the true unity will be revealed to these men as the false disappears: it is only a natural cowardice that makes one shrink from the thought of the anguish which they must suffer in the process.

And we should turn from any lessons which the letter has for them—lessons that we cannot bring home to them, that we may only weaken by enforcing—to those very pregnant ones which it contains for ourselves. One is surely this:—We have talked of the Pope's temporal, or rather local, sovereignty as if that were the great calamity under which Italy, and the nations of Christendom, were groaning. It may be a contradiction, but it is a contradiction which has done, and is doing, more to expose the pretence of ecclesiastics to

govern the world—the blasphemy which confounds their kingdom with God's kingdom—than any other. We cannot wish it to disappear till the doctrine which it teaches has been thoroughly laid to heart by every Church in every land. But in this letter it is not the local sovereign who speaks, it is the spiritual dogmatist; it is the man who identifies his decrees, which he considers to be the decrees of all ages, with the truth. It is this identification—this confusion of that which is thought or decreed by any man or any body of men, with that which is—that makes the letter so fierce an attack upon the faith and unity of Christendom, as well as upon science. If its creeds set forth Him who is, and was, and is to come—as we suppose they do—any attempt to put decrees and dogmas for truth must be a subversion of them. If the Sacraments of the Church assert the unity of man in a living and immortal Head, they must be the great antagonists of him who wishes to cut men off for not accepting his opinions. But that assertion is two-edged. It strikes as sharply against all Protestant, all English dogmatism, as against all Romish. The Pope's Encyclical Letter should be framed and glazed, and hung up in the house of every English clergyman, that he may understand what *he* is aiming at. If it is to do on a small scale what is here done on the largest scale, in the greatest perfection—let him read his sentence in this document. We can but play with tools that have been sharpened to the utmost, and have proved ineffectual. Success would be our greatest calamity; for is it not a calamity to prevail for a little while in fighting against the unity of Christendom, against humanity, against God?



## GEORGE BOOLE, F.R.S.

QUEEN'S COLLEGE, Cork, has lost a most distinguished professor, at a time when his genius was in its highest development. Of his early life we know nothing, except that he was not educated at a university, and that, about thirty years ago, a schoolmaster at Lincoln attracted the attention of the mathematical world by some mathematical speculations of unusual originality. By the year 1849 he had gained a name which procured him the professorship of mathematics at Cork, where he died on the 9th of December last, at some age, we suppose, between fifty and sixty. Of the private life of a person in his pursuits there is usually little to say: of Dr. Boole's the most important circumstance is that for thirteen years out of fifteen he worked at a very small salary, and, owing to the circumstances of the Queen's College, with a small number of pupils. Two years ago the proper feeling of the Government augmented the first source of income, and the growth of the College improved the second. But death has prevented his availing himself of the sunshine; and he leaves a widow and five children unprovided for.

Dr. Boole obtained some share of the honorary rewards which fall to men of science. He received a gold medal from the Royal Society, of which body he was afterwards a Fellow. He had a doctor's diploma from Oxford, and another from Dublin, and he had a prospect, cut short by his death, of admission to the French Institute. The character of his researches was beginning to be widely known.

There is a story which we believe to be perfectly true, and which shows that fortune has something to do in science as well as in war. The mathematical sciences are now distributed into so

many branches that there is not perhaps a man alive who is a competent judge of combined merit and originality in all. Dr. Boole's first communication to the Royal Society was submitted to a gentleman whose eminence lay in quite another line: he could see nothing in it worthy of note, and recommended its rejection. Casualty threw it under the eye of another person, who was better able to judge; it was accordingly printed, and it was the paper for which the gold medal was given. There is nothing in human affairs, we fully believe, more confidently to be expected than that a true and honest judgment will be formed and acted on as to all communications which get into the right hands. But there is a point which seems to bring the matter to a dead lock: before it can be known who is competent to examine a paper, the paper itself must be examined by a competent person! As to a well-known author there is no difficulty: his line is notorious, and his colleagues in that line. But a new man is liable to such a mischance as had nearly extinguished Dr. Boole, so far as the Royal Society is concerned. The story became public property at the time, and excited some remark: the warning which it gives is wanted, and should be occasionally revived.

This is not the place for a detailed account of Dr. Boole's scientific merits. The point which is most prominent is his power of development of algebraic language. The higher parts of the differential calculus—a name which now includes a great part of the higher mathematics—have of late years received accessions of power of quite a new kind; one of them has gained a distinctive name, the *calculus of operations*. Dr. Boole was one of the first and foremost among the labourers in this field. Of

equal note are his views on the higher part of the theory of probabilities and on formal logic.

In logic Dr. Boole has started one of the most remarkable developments of our day: in originality and suggestiveness *the* most remarkable, though far out of the common track. He has turned the whole of pure logic into pure algebra, so far as its language and transformations are concerned. He had done this without any intention of publication, and his mind was recalled to the subject by the discussion between Sir William Hamilton and Professor De Morgan. He accordingly published his first work on logic, which appeared, as it chanced, on the same day as Mr. De Morgan's "Formal Logic." It would take many pages to compare the two systems, which are very different, though there is much resemblance to those who only know that symbols are symbols. Hebrew and Sanscrit have a certain likeness in the eyes of those who know not a word of either: the chief difference being that Sanscrit letters seem strung on a clothes-line, while Hebrew letters look as if little chips had been knocked off and were lying about. The corresponding distinction between Dr. Boole and Mr. De Morgan is, that the first seems to deal in + and -, the second in accents and parentheses. The true distinction is that Mr. De Morgan, having some fundamental points closely in accordance with Dr. Boole, brings these points in aid of his developments of the common system; while Dr. Boole, removing himself altogether from common thought, finds in the language of algebra, as it stands, and in the rules of algebra, as they stand, the expression of all the laws of thought. Anybody can understand that, if "everything be either  $X$  or  $Y$ ," we may therefore say, "that

which is neither  $X$  nor  $Y$  does not exist." The reader of Dr. Boole's system sees the first in

$$X + Y - XY = 1,$$

and the second in

$$(1 - X)(1 - Y) = 0;$$

and a school-boy passes from one to the other, under very different meanings, by the rules of algebra.

Mr. Mansel objected to Mr. De Morgan that he made thought a branch of algebra instead of algebra a branch of thought. Mr. De Morgan replied by declaring that he did no more than show laws which work under cover in thought, the genus, but which work by daylight in algebra, the species. The objection, if valid, would apply still more strongly to Dr. Boole; and the answer would be still more to the point. When the approximation which is beginning, after long separation, to take place between the two great branches of exact science, logic and mathematics, shall have created a school of combined logicians and mathematicians, Dr. Boole will be not merely admired by logicians and mathematicians both, but appreciated.

His private character will be remembered with high regard by all who were acquainted with him. There are men benevolent as he was, as amiable, as charitable, as upright as he was. But there are very few who can uphold a strong opinion as firmly as he did, without rubbing an opponent the wrong way of the hair. He managed to show the other party a most dogmatical certainty that he himself was wholly right, without making prominent his sense of the necessary consequence that the other party was wholly wrong. And thus we end the few words we can give to the latest instance of combined genius and goodness, cut off in the midst of a great career.

## SAFI.

BY SEBASTIAN EVANS.

Safi knelt by the spring with her wonted pitcher at even,  
 Safi, slender of limb and small as the deer of the Desert,  
 Safi, daughter of Am, White Rose of the Desert Oasis.  
 Safi espied far away in the yellow mist of the Desert  
 Shimmering into a shape, how One rode, thirstily hasting  
 Tall on a camel aloft to the welcome fountain of blessing.  
 Taller he rode than men, though wayworn, wearily stooping,  
 Nigher and nigher amain as Safi hid from his presence  
 Trembling under the palm, as he dropped from his camel to drink there.  
 Still she stood in the sun, that among the stems of the palm-trees  
 Westering flooded with flame the sands and the blessed Oasis.  
 Still she stood while he drank, stood still as a hyacinth gathered,  
 Dreading almost to breathe lest the eye of the Stranger espy her.  
 Still she stood while they drank, that strange tall man and his camel,  
 Drank and drank yet again of the bubbling fountain of blessing,  
 Leaping alive from the rock, the life of the palms of the valley.

"Praise be to Allah!" he cried, "and thou, O Spring of the Desert,"  
 "Blessed be thou among springs evermore!" and straight from his finger  
 Loosing an emerald ring, a talisman flashing with cipher,  
 Dropped it into the fount: "Be this the thanks of the Pilgrim!  
 "So never more, O Spring, shall thy waters fail to the stranger,  
 "So never more shall drought or the sudden rains defile thee!  
 "Blessed be thou as the streams of Hiddekel, blessed for ever!"—

Safi heard where she stood in her hiding under the palm-tree,  
 Safi saw as she turned how her shadow fell from her hiding  
 Full on the tell-tale sward to the dusty foot of the Stranger.  
 "Beautiful art thou, O shadow!" he murmured, "beautiful also  
 "She who under the palm hath heard the prayer of the Stranger!—  
 "Beautiful, slender of limb, lithe, light as the lissom acacia,  
 "Beautiful, mild as the olive, hereafter haply as fruitful!  
 "Such an one would I wed,—will wed, by Allah, if only  
 "Stately she be as the palm,—bride meet for a Son of the Giants;  
 "Be she as tall as my ear, she shall wed the Son of the Giants!"

—Safi heard where she stood in her hiding under the palm-tree;  
 Safi blushed from her foot to the folds of her maidenly turban;  
 Safi's blood beat fast with sudden joy and amazement;  
 Safi's love as a rose to the sunshine opens its petals,  
 Blossomed glowing and sweet to the sunny word of the Stranger:  
 —Safi blanched from her foot to the folds of her maidenly turban;  
 Safi's blood stood still with sudden fear and amazement;  
 Safi's love, as a rose that feels the simoom of the Desert,  
 Drooped in her tremulous heart at the parching word of the Stranger,  
 Tingling hot in her ear,—“if stately, tall as a palm-tree” —

"I, what am I?—but a rose, little Rose of the Desert Oasis!"

— Tall he strode where she stood in her hiding under the palm-tree,  
Shamefast, eyeing the spring, little Rose of the Desert Oasis.  
"Peace, O maiden, be with thee!" and "Peace," she answered, "and blessing!"  
"Who, then, art thou, and whence, O maiden, Rose of the Desert?"—  
"Safi, daughter of Am, men call me, O Son of the Giants!"

"Safi, daughter of Am, thou art lithe as the lissom acacia,  
"Beautiful, mild as the olive, hereafter haply as fruitful,—  
"Would thou wert tall as the shadow that pointed thee out in thy hiding,  
"Stately and tall as a palm,—bride meet for a Son of the Giants!—  
"Peace be with thee, my child!"—and straightway turned he and left her!—

Safi stood by the spring and wept there,—desolate Safi!  
Never Safi had loved till she loved that Son of the Giants:—  
Never Safi had loved till she loved and lost him together!—  
Weeping she stood by the spring: "O Spring, he hath blest thee for ever!  
"Me hath he cursed though I love, though I love him only and ever!"  
Then in the spring she beheld an unwonted trouble of waters  
Bubble and boil as she gazed, and a Voice spake out of the fountain:  
"Peace be upon thee, O daughter of Am, little Rose of the Desert!  
"Safi, thee have I loved since first with thy pitcher at even  
"Hither thou camest, and oft have I prayed for a mate for my Safi,—  
"Oft have I prayed for my Safi a mate of the Sons of the Giants!  
"Lo, he hath left me a pledge, thou saw'st, of grateful remembrance,  
"Take thou, Safi, his ring—I am paid by gratitude only;  
"Mine are the gems of the Deep, and the secret ores of the Desert,  
"Mine is the diamond's frost and the costly blaze of the ruby,—  
"Mine is the Pilgrim's prayer,—be thine the pledge of his blessing!—  
"Take it,—lo, where it lies!—He loves whoe'er may possess it!  
"Take it, and sprinkle anon thy head seven times with my water!  
"Ask me no more, but trust!—and peace be upon thee and blessing!"

Safi knelt by the Spring: "Allah bless thee, fountain of blessing!"  
Safi slipped on her thumb the talisman flashing with cipher:  
Safi sprinkled her head seven times with the water of blessing:  
Safi slept by the spring the sleep of holy enchantment.

"Where is my Safi, my rose,—my Safi, light of my household?  
"Never to linger so long she wont by the fountain at even:  
"Why doth she linger so long, my Safi, Rose of the Desert?"  
Thus mused Am the Sheikh, as he marked a Stranger approaching,  
Stranger and camel that paced by the path that leads from the fountain;  
"Peace be with thee, O Stranger!" and "Peace," he answered, "and blessing;"  
"Enter thy servant's dwelling, and rest thyself and thy camel!"  
"Peace to thy house," he answered, "O Sheikh, and the blessing of Allah!"  
Thus they entered and sat. The bubbling cloud of the hookah  
Gratefully fragrant spread with the grateful fragrance of berries.  
Mutely they rested awhile, till the old man spoke to the Stranger:  
"Saw'st thou a damsel, O Stranger, by yonder wells with a pitcher?"  
"Father," he said, "by the spring did I leave one fair as the morning,  
"Beautiful, slender of limb, and lithe as the lissom acacia:  
"Is she thy daughter, O Sheikh? Thrice blessed art thou, O father!  
"Were she but tall as fair, she were bride for a Son of the Giants!"—  
"Peace from Allah be on thee, my son!" Then again they were silent,  
Silent till holy sleep sealed fast the eyes of the Stranger.  
"Peace be upon thee, my son! I go to seek for my Safi."

Safi he found by the well,—his Safi, Rose of the Desert,  
 Safi, Rose of the Desert, but Safi, tall as a palm-tree :—  
 Safi, no more, as of old, little Rose of the Desert Oasis,  
 Safi asleep by the well, but grown by a cubit in sleeping.—  
 “Allah be praised, O my child!—my child, His hand is upon thee!  
 “Beautiful ever thou wert, and lithe as the slender acacia,  
 “Stately and tall as a palm art thou now,—a bride for the Giants!”  
 —Safi woke from her sleep, the sleep of blessed enchantment;  
 Safi’s eyes as she woke met those of her sire’s amazement;  
 Safi’s heart stood still, and the life-blood failed within her.  
 “Is it a dream?—Allah’s will be done.—Never dreamed I aforeside  
 “Dream such as this,—so sweet, so strange!—Nay! Allah forgive me!  
 “Peace be upon thee, my father!—so strange I forgot to salute thee!”

Kneeling, she kissed his hand.—“What is this?—What ails thee, my father?  
 “How is thy shadow grown less! thyself so dwindled before me!—  
 “Sorcery is it?—Behold, I stoop, yet still thou art smaller!  
 “Even thy mookleh’s crown scarce reaches up to my eyebrow,  
 “Mine, whom thou wont to call little Rose of the Desert Oasis!  
 “Am I awake?—Is it thou?—I dreamed of the Sons of the Giants,  
 “Lo, I awake, and thyself dost seem a child of the Pigmies!  
 “Praised be Allah!—Ah when will He deign restore thee thy stature?”  
 —“Daughter,” said Am the Sheikh, “my Safi’s father hath changed not.  
 “I have not dwindled a hair, thyself hast grown by a cubit!—  
 “Allah hath wrought this change, though as yet its meaning I know not!”  
 —Safi was mute, for she felt in her heart her destiny certain.—

Homeward they wended together, perplexed both sire and daughter;  
 “Whence, my Safi, is this? this amulet flashing with cipher?  
 “Speak, for haply therein may the mystery’s drift be imprisoned!”  
 “Allah is great!” said Safi; “I stood by the spring with my pitcher:  
 “Lo, there rode to the spring on his camel a Son of the Giants,  
 “Drank and drank yet again of the bubbling fountain of blessing;  
 “Dropped this ring by the brim; lo, I seek him now to return it.”  
 Doubtfully on paced Am the Sheikh: “Not far shalt thou seek him;  
 “Even now in my dwelling he sleeps, this Son of the Giants!”  
 Safi again was mute, for she felt her destiny certain.

Homeward they wended together, both silent, sire and daughter.  
 Little to Safi—no more little Rose of the Desert Oasis—  
 Seemed the familiar stones, the palms and slender acacias;  
 Little the roofs and the gates, and little the home of her fathers,  
 Little the old dear door, where the Pilgrim stood by the threshold,  
 Cross-armed, bowed in salute: “Peace, peace be upon ye, and blessing;  
 “Allah forgive me my sleep! Thy guest was weary and wayworn—  
 “This thy daughter, O Sheikh? Thrice blessed art thou, O Father!  
 “Beautiful art thou, O maiden, and lithe as the slender acacia,  
 “Beautiful, mild as the olive, hereafter haply as fruitful!  
 “Stately and tall as the palm, bride meet for the Son of the Giants;  
 “Tall thou art as my ear; thou shalt wed the Son of the Giants!”

Safi heard where she stood by the little door of her fathers :—  
 Safi’s love, as a rose to the sunshine opens its petals,  
 Blossomed glowing and sweet to the sunny word of the Pilgrim.  
 Safi held forth a hand with the amulet flashing with cipher:  
 “Lo, is the talisman thine? O Pilgrim, read me the cipher!”—

Humbly the tall man knelt and kissed the hand of the maiden.

"Allah is great! Be the talisman thine! The fountain of blessing

"Gave thee the ring for thyself: thyself shalt read me the cipher!

"Allah is great, O Sheikh! Wilt give thy daughter in marriage?

"Safi, no more, as of old, little Rose of the Desert Oasis,—

"Safi, Rose of the Desert, but Safi, tall as a palm-tree,—

"Safi, slender of limb, but Safi, grown by a cubit,—

"Allah hath sealed her Himself, bride meet for a Son of the Giants!"

"Allah is great," said the Sheikh, "His ways are marvellous ever!

"Allah hath chosen Himself a bridegroom meet for my Safi!

"Be thou the son of my age,—thy household blessed for ever!"

## A SON OF THE SOIL.

### PART XV.

#### CHAPTER XLIII.

It is unnecessary to say that Colin won the prize on which he had set his heart. The record is extant in the University, to save his historian trouble; and, to be sure, nobody can be supposed to be ignorant on so important a point—at least nobody who is anybody and has a character to support. He took a double first-class—as he had set his heart on doing—and thereby obtained, as some great man once said in a speech, an equal standing to that of a duke in English society. It is to be feared that Colin did not experience the full benefits of his elevation; for, to be sure, such a dukedom is of a temporary character, and was scarcely likely to survive beyond his year. But the prize when it was won, and all the long details of the process of winning it, were not without their effect upon him. Colin, being still young and inexperienced, had, indeed, the idea that the possessor of such a distinction needed but to signify his august will, and straightway every possible avenue of advancement would open before him. But for that idea, the pride of carrying home his honours, and laying them at the feet of his native church and country, would have been much lessened; and, to tell the truth, when the moment of triumph came, Colin yielded a little to the intoxication, and lent his thoughts,

in spite of himself, to those charmed voices of ambition which, in every allegory that ever was invented, exercise their siren influence on the young man at the beginning of his career. He waited to be wooed at that eventful moment. He had a vague idea at the bottom of his heart that the State and the Church, and the Bar and the Press, would all come forward open-armed to tempt the hero of the year; and he had nobly determined to turn a deaf ear to all their temptations, and cling to his natural vocation, the profession to which he had been trained, with a constancy to which the world could not fail to do honour. Colin accordingly took possession of his honours with a little expectation, and waited for these siren-voices. When they did not come, the young man was a little astonished, a little mortified and cast down for the moment. But after that, happily, the absurdity of the position struck him. He burst into sudden laughter in his rooms, where he sat in all the new gloss of his fame and dignity, with much congratulation from his friends, but no particular excitement on the part of the world. Great Britain, as it appeared for the moment, was not so urgently in want of a new Secretary of State as to contest the matter with the parish of Glentummel, which had a claim upon the young man as its minister; and neither



the *Times* nor the *Quarterly Review* put then forth any pretensions to him. And University life, to which he might have had a successful *entrée*, did not exercise any charm upon Colin. A tutorship, though with unlimited prospect of pupils, and hopes of reaching soon the august elevation of Master, was not the vocation on which he had set his heart. The consequence was, as we have said, that the new Fellow of Balliol remained expectant for some time, then began to feel mortified and disappointed, and finally arose, with a storm of half-indignant laughter, to find that, after all, his position was not vitally changed by his successes. This was a strange, and perhaps in some respects a painful, discovery for a young man to make. He had distinguished himself among his fellows as much as a young soldier who had made himself the hero of a campaign would have distinguished himself among his; but this fact had very little effect upon his entry into the world. If he had been the Duke's son, his first-class glories would have been a graceful addition to the natural honours of his name, and perhaps might have turned towards him with favour the eyes of some of those great persons who hold the keys of office in their hands. But Colin was only the farmer of Ramore's son, and his prize did him no more good than any other useless laurel—except indeed that it might have helped him to advancement in the way of pupils, had that been Colin's *rôle*. But, considering how honourable a task it is to rear the new generation, it is astonishing how little enthusiasm generally exists among young men for that fine and worthy office. Colin had not the least desire to devote himself henceforward to the production of other first-class men—though, doubtless, that would have been a very laudable object of ambition; and, notwithstanding his known devotion to the “Kirk,” as his Oxford friends liked to call it, the young man was, no doubt, a little disappointed to find himself entirely at liberty to pursue his vocation. To be sure, Colin's “set” still remonstrated against his self-

immolation, and assured him that with his advantages fabulous things might be done. But the young Scotsman was too clear-sighted not to see that a great many of his congratulating friends had a very faint idea what to do with themselves, though some of them were but a step or two beneath him in honours. And, in the meantime, Colin felt quite conscious that the world gave no sign of wanting him, nor even availed itself of the commonest opportunities of seeking his invaluable services. A man who takes such a discovery in good part, and can turn back without bitterness upon his original intentions, is generally a man good for something; and this is precisely what, with much less flourish of trumpets than at the beginning, Colin found it necessary to do.

But he was not sorry to pay a visit to Wodensbourne, where he was invited after his victory, and to take a little time to think it all over. Wodensbourne had always been a kind of half-way house. It stood between him and his youthful life, with its limited external circumstances and unlimited expectations—and that other *real* life—the life of the man, wonderfully enlarged in outward detail, and miraculously shrunk and confined in expectation—which, by the force of the contrast, young as he was, seemed to make two men of Colin. It was there first that he had learned to distinguish between the brilliant peasant-firmament of Ramore, full of indistinct mists of glory, underneath which everything was possible—an atmosphere in which poor men rose to the steps of the throne, and princesses married pages, and the world was still young and fresh and primitive; and that more real sky in which the planets shone fixed and unapproachable, and where everything was bound by bonds of law and order, forbidding miracle. The more Colin had advanced, the more had he found advancement impossible according to the ideas entertained of it in his original sphere; and it was at Wodensbourne that he had first made this grand discovery. It was there he had learned the impossibility of the fundamental romance which at the

bottom of their hearts most people like to believe in—of that love which can leap over half a world to unite two people and to make them happy ever after, in spite not only of differences of fortune but of the far larger and greater differences by which society is regulated. Colin was on perfectly pleasant terms with Miss Matty by this time, and did not hide from himself how much he owed her,—though perhaps she, who owed him a momentary perception of the possibility which she had proved to his heart and understanding to be impossible, would have been but little grateful had she been made aware of the nature of his indebtedness. And now, having made still another discovery in his life, the young man was pleased to come to Wodensbourne to think over it, and make out what it meant. And the Franklands were, as always, very kind to Colin. Miss Matty, who had had a great many nibbles in the interval, was at length on the eve of being married. And Harry, who had nothing particular to do, and who found Wodensbourne stupid now that he was not to marry his cousin, was abroad, nobody seemed exactly to know where; and various things, not altogether joyful, had happened in the family, since the far-distant age when Colin was the tutor, and had been willing for Miss Matty's sake to resign everything, if it should even be his life.

"It will be a very nice marriage," said Lady Frankland. "I will not conceal from you, Mr. Campbell, that Matty has been very thoughtless, and given us a great deal of anxiety. It is always so much more difficult, you know, when you have the charge of a girl who is not your own child. One can say anything to one's own child; but your niece, you know—and, indeed, not even your own, but your husband's niece—"

"But I am sure Miss Frankland is as much attached to you," said Colin, who did not like to hear Matty blamed, "as if—"

"Oh yes," said Lady Frankland; "but still it is different. You must not think I am the least vexed about Harry. I

never thought her the proper person for Harry. He has so much feeling, though strangers do not see it; and, if he had been disappointed in his wife after they were married, fancy what my feelings would have been, Mr. Campbell. I was always sure they never would have got on together; and you know, when that is the case, it is so much better to break off at once."

"What is that you are saying about breaking off at once?" said Miss Matty, who came into the room at that moment. "It must be Mr. Campbell who is consulting you, aunt. I thought he would have asked *my* advice in such a case. I do believe my lady has forgotten that there ever was a time when she was not married and settled, and that is why she gives you such cruel advice. Mr. Campbell, I am much the best counsellor, and I beg of you, don't break it off at once!" said Miss Matty, looking up in his face with eyes that were half mocking and half pathetic. She knew very well it was herself whom my lady had been talking of—which made her the more disposed to send back the arrow upon Colin. But Matty, after all, was a good deal disconcerted—more disconcerted than he was, when she saw the sudden flush that came to Colin's face. Naturally, no woman likes to make the discovery that a man who has once been her worshipper has learned to transfer his affections to somebody else. When she saw that this chance shaft had touched him, she herself was conscious of a sudden flush—a flush which had nothing whatever to do with love, but proceeded from the indescribable momentary vexation and irritation with which she regarded Colin's desertion. That he was her adorer no longer was a fact which she had consented to; but Miss Matty experienced a natural movement of indignation when she perceived that he had elevated some one else to the vacant place. "Oh, if you look like that, I shall think it quite unnecessary to advise," she said, with a little spitefulness, lowering her voice.

"What do I look like?" said Colin with a smile; for Lady Frankland had

withdrawn to the other end of the room, and the young man was perfectly disposed to enter upon one of the half-mocking, half-tender conversations which had given a charm to his life of old.

"What do you look like?" said Miss Matty. "Well, I think you look a great deal more like other people than you used to do; and I hate men who look like everybody else. One can generally tell a woman by her dress," said the young lady pensively; "but most men that one meets in society want to have little labels with their names on them. I never can tell any difference between one and another for my part."

"Then perhaps it would clear the haze a little if I were to name myself," said Colin. "I am Colin Campbell of Ramore, at your ladyship's service—once tutor to the learned and witty Charley, that hope of the house of Wodensbourne—and once also your ladyship's humble boatman and attendant on the Holy Loch."

"Fellow of Balliol, double-first—Coming man, and reformer of Scotland," said Miss Matty with a laugh. "Yes, I recognise you; but I am not my ladyship just yet. I am only Matty Frankland for the moment, Sir Thomas's niece, who has given my lady a great deal of trouble. Oh, yes; I know what she was saying to you. Girls who live in other people's houses know by instinct what is being said about them. Oh, to be sure, it is quite true; they have been very, very kind to me; but, don't you know, it is dreadful always to feel that people are kind. Ah! how sweet it used to be on the Holy Loch. But you have forgotten one of your qualifications, Mr. Campbell; you used to be poet as well as tutor. I think, so far as I was concerned, it was the former capacity which you exercised with most applause. I have a drawer in my desk full of certain effusions; but, I suppose, now you are a Fellow of Balliol you are too dignified for that."

"I don't see any reason why I should be," said Colin; "I was a great deal more dignified, for that matter, when I

was eighteen, and a student at Glasgow College, and had very much more lofty expectations then than now."

"Oh, you always were devoted to the Kirk," said Miss Matty; "which was a thing I never could understand—and now less than ever, when everybody knows that a man who has taken such honours as you have, has everything open to him."

"Yes," said Colin; "but then what everybody knows is a little vague. I should like to know of any one thing that really is open to me except taking pupils. Of course," said the young man, with dignity, "my mind is made up long ago, and my profession fixed; but for the good of other people in my position—and for my own good as well," Colin added with a laugh—"for you know it is pleasant to feel one's-self a martyr, rejecting every sort of advantage for duty's sake."

"Oh, but of course it is quite true," said Matty; "you are giving up everything—of course it is true. You know you might go into Parliament, or you might go into the Church, or you might—I wish you would speak to my uncle about it; I suppose he knows. For my part, I think you should go into Parliament; I should read all your speeches faithfully, and always be on your side."

"That is a great inducement," said Colin. "With that certainty one could face a great many obstacles. But, on the other hand, when I have settled down somewhere in my own profession, you can come and hear me preach."

"That will not be half so interesting," said Miss Matty, making a little *move* of disdain; "but, now, tell me," she continued, sinking her voice to its most confidential tone, "what it was that made you look so I—you know we are very old friends," said Miss Matty, with the least little tender touch of pathos; "we have done such quantities of things together—rowed on the Holy Loch, and walked in the woods, and discussed Tennyson, and amused Sir Thomas—you ought to tell me your secrets; you don't know what a good *confidante* I

should be, and if I know the lady—— But, at all events, you must tell me what made you look so?" said, with her sweetest tone of inquisitive sympathy, the siren of Colin's youth.

"Perhaps—when you have explained to me what it means to look *so*," said Colin; "after being buried for three years one forgets that little language. And then I am disposed to deny ever having looked *so*," he went on, laughing; but, notwithstanding his laugh, Colin was much more annoyed than became his reasonable years and new dignities to feel once more that absurd crimson rising to his hair. The more he laughed the higher rose that guilty and conscious colour; and, as for Miss Matty, she pointed her little pink finger at him with an air of triumph.

"There!" she said, "and you dare to pretend that you never looked *so*! I shall be quite vexed now if you don't tell me. If it was not something very serious," said Miss Matty, "you would not change like *that*."

"Here is Sir Thomas; he will never accuse me of looking *so*, or changing like *that*—and it is a guest's first duty to make himself agreeable to his host, is it not?" said Colin, who was rather glad of Sir Thomas's arrival. As for Matty, she was conscious that Lady Frankland had given her what she would have called "a look" before leaving the room, and that her uncle regarded her with a little anxiety as he approached. Decidedly, though she liked talking to Colin, it was necessary to be less confidential. "I won't say *au revoir*," she said, shrugging her pretty shoulders; "you know what you said about that once upon a time, when you were a poet." And then Matty felt a little sorry for herself as she went away. "They might know, if they had any sense, that it does not matter in the least what I say to *him*," the young lady said to herself; but then she was only suffering the natural penalty of a long course of conquest, and several good matches sacrificed, and matters were serious this time, and not to be trifled with. Miss Matty accordingly gave up her researches

into Colin's secret; but not the less regarded with a certain degree of lively despite, the revelation out of the clouds of that unknown woman at thought of whom Colin blushed. "I daresay it is somebody quite stupid, who does not understand him a bit," she said to herself, taking a little comfort from the thought—for Matty Frankland was not a model woman, desiring only the hero's happiness; and a man who is sufficiently insensible to console himself under such circumstances with another attachment deserves to have his inconstancy punished, as anybody will allow.

To tell the truth, Colin, though guiltless of any breach of allegiance towards Matty, was punished sufficiently for his second attempt at love. He had heard nothing of Alice all these three years, but, notwithstanding, had never ceased to feel upon his neck that invisible bridle which restrained him against his will. Perhaps, if the woman of his imagination had ever fairly revealed herself, the sight would have given him courage to break for ever such a visionary bond, and to take possession of his natural liberty; but she contented herself with waving to him those airy salutations out of the clouds, and with now and then throwing a glance at him out of the eyes of some passer-by, who either disappeared at once from his sight, or turned out upon examination to be utterly unlike that not impossible She; and Colin had two sentinels to keep watch upon his honour in the forms of his mother and Lauderdale, both of whom believed in Love, and did not know what inconstancy meant. He said to himself often enough that the struggle in his heart was not inconstancy; but then he was not a man who would admit to them, or even to himself, that the bond between him and Alice was a great and tender pity, and not love. She had been on the eve of becoming his wife—she might be his wife still for anything he knew to the contrary—and Colin, who in this respect was spotless as any Bayard, would not, even to his dearest friends, humiliate by such a confession the woman he had once sought

to marry. But now the time was almost come when he could in reality "settle in life." His Scotch parish came nearer and nearer, in the natural course of affairs, without any dazzling obstacles and temptations between it and himself, as he had once hoped; and Alice was of age by this time; and honour seemed to demand that, now when his proposal really meant something, he should offer to her the possibility of confirming her early choice. But somehow Colin was not at all anxious to take this step; he hung back, and nursed the liberty which still remained to him, and longed, in spite of himself, towards the visionary creature of his dreams, who was not Alice. Accordingly, he had two rather troublesome matters to think over at Wodensbourne, and occupied a position which was made all the more vexatious because it was at the same time amusing and ridiculous. His mind had been made up from the beginning as to his future life, as he truly said; but then he had quite intended it to be a sacrifice which he made out of his supreme love for his Church and his country. He meant to have fought his way back to the venerable mother through every sort of brilliant temptation; and to carry his honours to her with a disinterested love which he should prove by leaving behind him still higher honours and ambitions; whereas, in reality, the world was permitting him to return very quietly to his native country as if it was the most natural thing in the world. The disappointment was perhaps harsher in its way than if Colin had meant to avail himself of those splendid imaginary chances; and it did not make it any the less hard to bear that he himself saw the humour of the situation, and could not but laugh grimly at himself. Perhaps Colin will suffer in the opinion of the readers of this history when we add that, notwithstanding the perplexing and critical character of the conjuncture, and notwithstanding the other complication in his history in regard of Alice, he employed his leisure at Wodensbourne, after the interview we have recorded, in

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writing<sup>1</sup> verses for Miss Matty. It was true she had challenged him to some such task, but still it was undoubtedly a weakness on the part of a man with so much to think of. Truth, however, compels his historian to confess to this frivolity. As he strayed about the flat country, and through the park, the leisure in which he had intended to think over his position only betrayed him to this preposterous idleness—for, to be sure, life generally arranges itself its own way without much help from thinking; but one cannot succeed in writing a farewell to a first love, for whom one retains a certain kindness, without a due attention to one's rhymes:

Underneath we give the last copy of nonsense-verses which Colin was seduced into writing, though the chief interest they possess is chronological, as marking the end of the period of life in which a man can express himself in this medium. As for Miss Matty, to tell the truth, she received them with less of her usual good grace than might have been desired; for, though in her own person she was perfectly reconciled to the loss of his devotion, and quite safe in entertaining the mildest sentiments of friendship, still she was naturally vexed a little to see how he had got over it—which was a thing not to be expected, nor perhaps desired. This however, was the calm and self-controlled tone of Colin's farewell:—

"Be it softly, slowly said,  
With a smile and with a sigh,  
As life's noiseless hands untie  
Links that youth has made—  
Not with sorrow or with tears:  
With a sigh for those sweet years,  
Drawing slow apart the while;  
For those sweetest years a smile.

Thus farewell! The sound is sweet  
Parting leaves no sting behind:  
One bright chamber of the mind  
Closing gracious and complete,  
Softly shut the silent door;  
Never shade can enter more—  
Safe, for what is o'er can last;  
Somewhat sad, for it is past.

So farewell! The accents blend  
With sweet sounds of life to be;  
Never could there dawn for me  
Hope of any dearer end.  
Dear it is afar to greet  
The bright path before thy feet,  
Thoughts that do thy joy no wrong:  
Chiming soft the even-song,  
Till morn wakes the bridal bell  
Fair and sweet, farewell! farewell!"

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and this was the sole result, as far as anybody was aware, of Colin's brief but pleasant holiday at Wodensbourne.

#### CHAPTER XLIV.

It is so difficult a matter to tell the story of a man's life without wearying the audience that we will make a leap over all the circumstances of Colin's probation in Scotland, though they were sufficiently amusing. For, naturally, the presbytery of Glen-Diarmid—in which district the Holy Loch, Colin's native parish, is situated—were a little at a loss what to make of a Fellow of Balliol when he offered himself for licence. To be sure, they made a long pause over the fact of his Fellowship, which implied that he was a member of the Church of England; but the presbytery permitted Colin to be heard in defence, and he had friends among them, and had sufficient skill with his weapons to perplex and defeat any rising antagonist. Besides, it was not in the nature of a country presbytery in this tolerant age to be otherwise than a little proud of the academical honours which the young neophyte bore. "If we accept any lout who comes up for licence, and refuse a lad of his attainments, what do you suppose the world will think of us?" said one of the more enlightened members of the clerical court, forgetting, as was natural, that the world concerned itself very little with the doings of the presbytery of Glen-Diarmid. "It's safe to leave all that to the objectors when he comes to be placed," said another of Colin's judges, more wary than his brother; "if he's not sound, you may trust it to them to find that out,"—and the young man was accordingly endued with the preliminary privileges of preacher, and licensed to exercise his gift. Colin had made friends all along the road of his life, as some men are happy enough to do, and had many who would have been pleased to do him a service, and one, as it happened, who at this juncture could; and so it befell that, a very short time after, the second

and more serious trial to which the prudent presbyter had referred, came into the life of the young preacher. He was presented, as people say in Scotland, to the parish of Lafton, in the county, or, as the natives prefer to call it, the kingdom of Fife. It was a good living enough, making up, when the harvest was of average productiveness, and wheat steady, rather more than three hundred pounds a year—and more than that when the harvest was bad and the price of corn high;—and there was an excellent manse, not much inferior to an English parsonage, and a compact little comfortable glebe, of which a minister of agricultural tastes might make something if he chose; and, above all, there were "heritors" of good conditions, and a university town, of small dimensions but wealthy in point of society, within reach—all of which points seemed to Colin's English friends a fabulous combination of advantages to be found in a Scotch parish. Colin, however, did not fully describe the horrible gulf which lay between him and his benefice to anybody out of Scotland; for he was not the man to betray the imperfections of his beloved country, even while he suffered from them. His historian, however, does not require to exercise so much delicacy; and, as Colin's case was exactly the same as that of any other young clergyman in the Church of Scotland, there is no betrayal of confidence involved. Between him and that haven there was a channel to cross before which the boldest might have quailed. The parish of Lafton was a large parish, and there were seven hundred and fifty people in it who had a right to "object" to Colin. They had a right to object, if they liked, to his looks, or his manners, or his doctrines, or the colour of his hair; they had a right to investigate all his life, and make a complaint at "the bar of the presbytery"—which meant, at the same time, in all the local newspapers, eager for any kind of gossip—that he had once been guilty of bird's-nesting, or had heard the midnight chimes at some unguarded moment of his youth. When Colin entered the

pulpit for the first time in the parish to which he was presented, he made his appearance there not to instruct the congregation, but to be inspected, watched, judged, and finally objected to—and all the process was vigorously enforced in his case. For, to be sure, there were several things to be remarked in this young man—or, as the people of Lafton expressed it, “this new laud”—which were out of the way, and unlike other people. He was a lad that had not found Scotch education good enough for him, but had gone to England for at least part of his training. To be sure, he had partly made up for this by taking the highest honours possible, and coming out of the contest in a manner creditable to Scotland—which was a point in his favour. And then his prayers (which was odd, as Colin was decidedly a liturgist) were wanting in those stock expressions which, more pertinacious than any liturgy, haunt the public prayers of the ordinary ministers of the Church of Scotland; and his sermons were short and innocent of divisions, and of a tenor totally unlike what the respectable parishioners had been used to hear. Some of the shrewder elders were of opinion that this or that expression “might mean anything”—a conclusion in which there was a certain truth, for Colin, as we have said, was not perfectly clear on all points as to what he believed. If he was not altogether heterodox on the subject of eternal punishment, for example, he was, to say the least, extremely vague, and, indeed, deserted doctrinal ground altogether as often as he could, and took refuge in life and its necessities in a way which, doubtless, had its effect on the uninstructed multitude, but was felt to be meagre and unsatisfactory to the theologians of the parish. Two or three public meetings were held on the subject before it was time to lodge the final objections against the “presentee;” and Colin himself, who was living at St. Rule’s, within a few miles of the theatre of war, naturally found those meetings, and the speeches thereat, which appeared in the *Five Argus*, much less amusing than an impartial spectator might have

done. And then the same enlightened journal contained all sorts of letters on the subject—letters in which “An On-looker” asked whether the Rev. Mr. Campbell, who was presentee to the parish of Lafton, was the same Mr. Campbell who had passed a spring at Rome three or four years before, and had been noted for his leaning to the Papacy and its superstitious observances; while, on the other hand, “A Fife Elder” implored the parishioners to take notice that the man whom an Erastian patron—not himself a member of the Church, and perhaps unaware how dearly the spiritual privileges purchased by the blood of their martyred forefathers are regarded by Scotsmen—thus endeavoured to force upon them, was notoriously a disciple of Jowett, and belonged to the most insidious school of modern infidelity. It was the main body of the opposing army which made such attacks; but there was no lack of skirmishers, who treated the subject in a lighter manner, and addressed the obliging editor in a familiar and playful fashion:—“Sir,—Having nothing better to do last Sunday morning, I strayed into the parish church of Lafton, with the intention of worshipping with the congregation; but you may judge of my surprise when I observed ascending the pulpit-stairs a young gentleman presenting all the appearance of a London swell or a cavalry officer, with a beard upon which it was evident he had spent more time than on his sermon”—wrote a witty correspondent; while another indignant Scot demanded solemnly, “Is it to be tolerated that our very pulpits should be invaded by the scum of the English Universities, inexperienced lads that make a hash of the Prayer-book, and preach sermons that may do very well on the other side of the Tweed, but won’t go down here?”

Such were the pleasant effusions with which Colin’s friend at St. Rule’s amused his guest at breakfast. They were very amusing to a spectator safely established in the Elysian fields of a Scotch professorship, and beyond the reach of objections; but they were not amusing, to

speak of, to Colin; and the effect they produced upon the household at Ramore may be faintly imagined by the general public, as it will be vividly realized by such Scotch families as have sons in the Church. The Mistress had said to herself, with a certain placid thankfulness, "It's little they can have to say about my Colin, that has been aye the best and the kindest." But when she saw how much could be made of nothing, the indignation of Colin's mother did not prevent her from being wounded to the heart. "I will never mair believe either in justice or charity," she said, with a thrill of wrath in her voice which had never before been heard at Ramore; "him that was aye so true and faithful—him that has aye served his Master first, and made no account of this world!" And, indeed, though his mother's estimate of him might be a little too favourable, it is certain that few men more entirely devoted to his work than Colin had ever taken upon them the cure of souls. That, however, was a matter beyond the ken of the congregation and parish of Lafton. There were seven hundred and fifty communicants, and they had been well trained in doctrine under their late minister, and had a high character for intelligence; and, when an opportunity thus happily arrived for distinguishing themselves, it was not in human nature to neglect it. Had not West Port worried to the point of extinction three unhappy men whom the Crown itself had successively elevated to the unenviable distinction of presentee? The Lafton case now occupied the newspapers as the West Port case had once occupied them. It combined all the attractions of a theological controversy and a personal investigation; and, indeed, there could have been few better points of view for observing the humours of Scotch character and the peculiarities of rural Scotch society of the humbler levels; only that, as we have before said, the process was not so amusing as it might have been to Colin and his friends.

"Me ken Mr. Jowett?" said the leading weaver of Lafton; "no, I ken

nothing about him. I'm no prepared to say what he believes. For that matter (but this was drawn out by cross-examination), I'm no just prepared to say at a moment's notice what I believe myself. I believe in the Confession of Faith and the Shorter Catechism. No, I cannot just say that I've ever read the Confession of Faith—but eh, man, you ken little about parish schools if you think I dinna ken the Catechism. Can I say 'What is Effectual Calling'? I would like to know what right you have to ask me. I'll say it at a proper time, to them that have a title to ask. I'm here to put in my objections against the presentee. I'm no here to say my questions. If I was, may be I would ken them better than you."

"Very well; but I want to understand what you know about Mr. Jowett," said the counsel for the defence.

"I've said already I ken naething about Mr. Jowett. Lord bless me! it's no a man, it's a principle we're thinking of. No, I deny that; it's no an oath. 'Lord bless me!' is a prayer, if you will be at the bottom o't. We've a muckle need to say that. I say the presentee is of the Jowett school of infidelity; that's the objection I'm here to support."

"But, my friend," said a member of the presbytery, "it is necessary that you should be more precise. It is necessary to say, you know, that Mr. Jowett rejects revelation; that he——"

"Moderator, I call my reverend brother to order," said another minister; "the witness is here to give evidence about Mr. Campbell. No doubt he is prepared to show us how the presentee has proved himself to belong to the Jowett school."

"Oh ay," said the witness; "there's plenty evidence of that. I took notes mysel' of a' the sermons. Here's one of them. It's maybe a wee in my ain words, but there's nae change in the sense,— 'My freends, it's aye best to look after your ain business: it's awfu' easy to condemn others. We're all the children of the Heavenly Father. I have seen devotion among a when poor uninstructed Papists that would put the best of you to shame'—No, that's no what I

was looking for; that's the latitudinarian bit."

"I think it has been said, among other things," said another member of the presbytery, "that Mr. Campbell had a leaning towards papal error; it appears to me that the witness's note is almost a proof of that."

"Moderator," said Colin's counsel, "I beg to call your attention to the fact that we are not discussing the presentee's leaning towards papal error, but his adherence to the Jowett school of infidelity, whatever that may be. If the witness will inform us, or if any of the members of the court will inform us, what Mr. Jowett believes, we will then be able to make some reply to this part of the case."

"I dinna ken naething about Mr. Jowett," said the cautious witness. "I'm no prepared to enter into any personal question. It's no the man but the principle that we're heeding, the rest of the objectors and me."

"The witness is perfectly right," said a conscientious presbyter; "if we were tempted to enter into personal questions there would be no end to the process. My friend, the thing for you to do in this delicate matter is to lead proof. No doubt the presentee has made some statement which has led you to identify him with Mr. Jowett. He has expressed some doubts, for example, about the origin of Christianity or the truth of revelation—"

"Order, order," cried the enlightened member; "I protest against such leading questions. Indeed, it appears to me, Moderator, that it is impossible to proceed with this part of the case unless it has been made clearly apparent to the court what Mr. Jowett believes."

Upon which there naturally ensued a lively discussion in the presbytery, in which the witness was with difficulty prevented from joining. The subject was without doubt sufficiently unfathomable to keep half-a-dozen presbyteries occupied; and there were at that period in the kingdom of Fife, men of sufficient temerity to pronounce authoritatively even upon a matter so mysterious and

indefinite. The court, however, adjourned that day without coming to any decision; and even the Edinburgh papers published a report of the Lafton case, which involved so many important interests. However, an accident, quite unforeseen, occurred in Colin's favour before the next meeting of his reverend judges. It happened to one of these gentlemen to meet the great heresiarch himself, who has been known to visit Scotland. This respectable presbyter did not ask—for to be sure it was at dinner—what the stranger believed; but he asked him instead if he knew Mr. Campbell, the presentee to Lafton, who had taken a first class at Oxford. If the answer had been too favourable, Colin's fate might have been considered as sealed. "Campbell of Balliol—oh, yes; a very interesting young man; strange compound of prejudice and enlightenment. He interested me very much," said the heresiarch: and, on that ground of objection at least, Colin was saved.

He was saved on the others also, as it happened, but more by accident than by any effect which he produced on his reluctant parishioners. By dint of repeated examinations on the model of that which we have quoted above, the presbytery came to the decision that the presentee's leaning to papal error was, like his adherence to the Jowett school of theology, not proven; and they even—for presbyteries also march to a certain extent with the age—declined to consider the milder accusation brought against him, of favouring the errors of his namesake, Mr. Campbell of Row. By this time, it is true, Colin was on the point of abandoning for ever the Church to which at a distance he had been willing to give up all his ambitions, and the Mistress was wound up to such a pitch of indignant excitement as to threaten a serious illness, and Lauderdale had publicly demonstrated his wrath by attending "the English chapel," as he said, "two Sundays running." As for Colin, in the quiet of St. Rule's, feeling like a culprit on his trial, and relishing not at all the notion of being taken to pieces by the papers, even though they were merely

papers of Fife, he had begun to regard with some relief the idea of going back to Balliol and reposing on his Fellowship, and even taking pupils, if nothing better came in his way. If he could have gone into Parliament, as Matty Frankland suggested, the indignant young man would have seized violently on that means of exposing to the House and the world the miseries of a Scotch presentee and the horrors of Lord Aberdeen's Act. But, fortunately, he had no means of getting into Parliament, and a certain sense at the bottom of his heart that this priesthood which had to be entered by a channel so painful and humiliating was in reality his true vocation retained him as by a silken thread. If he had been less convinced on this point, no doubt he would have abandoned the mortifying struggle, and the parish of Lafton, having whetted its appetite upon him, would have gone freshly to work upon another unhappy young preacher, and crunched his bones with equal satisfaction; and, what is still more important to us, this history would have broken off abruptly short of its fit and necessary period. None of these misfortunes happened, because Colin had at heart a determination to make himself heard, and enter upon his natural vocation, and because, in the second place, he was independent, and did not at the present moment concern himself in the smallest degree about the stipend of the parish, whether corn was at five pounds the chaldron or five shillings. To be sure, it is contrary to the ordinary habit of biography to represent a young clergyman as entering a parish against the will or with the dislike of the inhabitants; as a general rule it is at worst; an interested curiosity, if not a lively enthusiasm, which the young parish priests of literature find in their village churches; but then it is not England or Arcadia of which we are writing, nor of an ideal curate or spotless primitive vicar, but only of Colin Campbell and the parish of Lafton, in the kingdom of Fife, in the country of Scotland, under the beneficent operation of Lord Aberdeen's Act.

However, at last the undignified com-

bat terminated. After the objections were all disposed of, the seven hundred and fifty communicants received their minister, it is to be hoped, with the respect due to a victor. Perhaps it was a touch of disdain on Colin's part—proving how faulty the young man remained, notwithstanding, as the Mistress said, "all he had come through"—that prompted him to ascend the pulpit, after the struggle was over, with his scarlet hood glaring on his black gown to the consternation of his parishioners. It cannot be denied that this little movement of despite was an action somewhat unworthy of Colin at such a moment and in such a place; but then he was young, and it is difficult for a young man to do under all circumstances exactly what he ought. When he had got there and opened his mouth, Colin forgot all about his scarlet hood—he forgot they had all objected to him and put him in the papers. He saw only before him a certain corner of the world in which he had to perform the highest office that is confided to man. He preached without thinking he was preaching, forgetting all about doctrines, and only remembering the wonderful bewildering life in which every soul before him had its share, the human mysteries and agonies, the heaven, so vague and distant, the need so urgent and so near. In sight of these, which had nothing to do with Lord Aberdeen's Act, Colin forgot that he had been put innocently on his trial and taken to pieces; and, what was still more strange, when two or three harmless weeks had passed, the seven hundred and fifty communicants had clean forgotten it too.

## CHAPTER XLV.

BUT, after all, there are few trials to which a man of lofty intentions and an elevated ideal, can be exposed, more severe than the entirely unexpected one which comes upon him when he has had his way, and finds himself for the first time in the much-desired position in which he can carry out all the plans



of his youth. Perhaps few people arrive so completely at this point as to acknowledge it distinctly to themselves ; for, to be sure, human projects and devices have a knack of expanding and undergoing a gradual change from moment to moment. Something of the kind, however, must accompany, for example, every happy marriage ; though perhaps it is the woman more than the man who comes under its influence. The beautiful new world of love and goodness into which the happy bride supposes herself to be entering comes to bear after a while so extraordinary a resemblance to the ordinary mediocre world which she has quitted that the young woman stands aghast and bewildered. The happiness which has come has withdrawn a more subtle happiness, that ideal perfection of being to which she has been more or less looking forward all her life. Colin, when he had gone through all his trials, and had fairly reached the point at which the heroic and magnificent existence which he meant to live should commence, found himself very much in the same position. The young man was still in the fantastic age. To preach his sermons every Sunday, and do his necessary duty, and take advantage of the good society at St. Rule's, did not seem a life sufficient for the new minister. What he had thought of was something impossible, a work for his country, an elevation of the national firmament, an influence which should mellow the rude goodness of Scotland, and link her again to all the solemn past, to all the good and gracious present, to all the tender lights and dawns of hope. Colin had derived from all the religious influences with which he had been brought in contact a character which was perhaps only possible to a young Scotchman and Presbyterian strongly anchored to his hereditary creed, and yet feeling all its practical deficiencies. He was High Church, though he smiled at Apostolic succession ; he was Catholic, though the most gorgeous High Mass that ever was celebrated would have moved him no more than one of Verdi's operas. When other enlightened British spectators re-

garded with lofty superiority the poor papist people coming and going into all the tawdry little churches, and singing vespers horribly out of tune, Colin for his part looked at them with a sigh for his own country, which had ceased to recognise any good in such devotion. And all through his education, from the moment when he smiled at the prayer-book under the curate's arm at Wodensbourne, and wondered what a Scotch peasant would think of it, to the time when he studied in the same light the prelections of the University preacher in St. Mary's, Colin's thought had been, "Would I were in the field." It appeared to him that if he were but there, in all his profusion of strength and youth, he could breathe a new breath into the country he loved. What he meant to do was to untie the horrible bands of logic and knit fair links of devotion around that corner of the universe which it has always seemed possible to Scotsmen to make into a Utopia ; to persuade his nation to join hands again with Christendom, to take back again the festivals and memories of Christianity, to rejoice in Christmas and sing lauds at Easter, and say common prayers with a universal voice. These were to be the outward signs ; but the fact was that it was a religious revolution in Scotland at which Colin aimed. He meant to dethrone the pragmatic and arrogant preacher, whose reign has lasted so long. He meant to introduce a more humble self-estimate, and a more gracious temper into the world he swayed in imagination. From this dream Colin woke up, after the rude experience of the objectors, to find himself at the head of his seven hundred and fifty communicants, with authority to say anything he liked to them (always limited by the knowledge that they might at any time "libel" him before the presbytery, and that the presbytery might at any time prosecute, judge, and condemn him), and to a certain extent spiritual ruler of the parish, with a right to do anything he liked in it, always subject to the approval of the Session, which could contravert him in many ingenious ways. The young man was

at last in the position to which he had looked forward for years—at last his career was begun, and the course of his ambition lay clear before him. Nothing now remained but to realize all these magnificent projects, and carry out his dreams.

But the fact is that Colin, instead of plunging into his great work, stood on the threshold struck dumb and bewildered, much as a bride might do on the threshold of the new home which she had looked forward to as something superior to Paradise. The position of his dreams was obtained, but these dreams had never till now seemed actually hopeless and preposterous. When he took his place up aloft in his high pulpit, from which he regarded his people much as a man at a first-floor window might regard the passers-by below, and watched the ruddy countrymen pouring in with their hats on their heads and a noise like thunder, the first terrible blow was struck at his palace of fancy. They were different altogether from the gaping rustics at Wodensbourne, to whom that good little curate preached harmless sermons out of his low desk, about the twenty-first Sunday after Trinity, and the admirable arrangements of the Church. Colin upstairs at his first-floor window was in no harmless position. He was put up there for a certain business, which the audience down below understood as well as he did. As for prayers and psalm-singing, they were necessary preliminaries to be got over as quickly as possible. The congregation listened and made internal criticisms as the young minister said his prayers. "He's awfu' limited in his confessions," one of the elders whispered to another. "I canna think he's fathomed the nature o' sin, for my part;" and Colin was conscious by something in the atmosphere, by a certain hum and stir, that, though his people were a little grateful to find his first attempt at devotion shorter than usual, a second call upon them was regarded with a certain displeased surprise; for, to be sure, the late minister of Lafton had been of the old school.

And then, this inevitable preface having been disposed of, the congregation settled down quietly to the business of the day. Colin was young, and had kept his youthful awe of the great mysteries of faith, though he was a minister. It struck him with a sort of panic—when he looked down upon all those attentive faces, and recalled to himself the idea that he was expected to teach them, to throw new light upon all manner of doctrines, and open up the Bible, and add additional surety to the assurance already possessed by the audience—that it was a very well-instructed congregation and knew all about the system of Christian theology. It gleamed upon Colin in that terrible moment that, instead of being a predestined reformer, he was a very poor pretender indeed, and totally inadequate to the duties of the post which he had taken upon him thus rashly; for, indeed, he was not by any means so clear as most of his hearers were about the system of theology. This sudden sense of incapacity, which came upon him at the very moment when he ought to have been strongest, was a terrible waking up for Colin. He preached his sermon afterwards, but with pale lips and a heart out of which all the courage seemed to have died for the moment; and betook himself to his manse afterwards to think it all over, with a horrible sense overpowering all his faculties that, after all, he was a sham and impostor, and utterly unworthy of exercising influence upon any reasonable creature. For, to be sure, though a lofty ideal is the best thing in the world, according to its elevation is the pain and misery of the fall.

The consequence was that Colin stopped short in a kind of fright after he had made this first discovery, and that, after all his great projects, nothing in the world was heard all that winter of the young reformer. To return to our metaphor, he was silent as a young wife sometimes finds herself among the relics of her absurd youthful fancies, contemplating the ruin ruefully, and not yet fully awakened to the real possibilities of the position. During this

little interval he came gradually down out of his too lofty ideas to consider the actual circumstances. When Lauderdale came to see him, which he did on the occasion of the national new-year holiday, Colin took his friend to see his church with a certain comic despair. "I have a finer chancel than that at Wodensbourne, which was the curate's object in life," said Colin; "but, if I made any fuss about it, I should be set down as an idiot; and, if any man has an imagination sufficiently lively to conceive of your ploughmen entering my church as our poor friends went into the Pantheon——"

"Dinna be unreasonable," said Lauderdale. "You were aye awfu' fantastic in your notions; what should the honest men ken about a chancel? I wouldna say that I'm just clear on the subject mysel'. As for the Pantheon, that was aye an awfu' delusion on your part. Our cathedral at Glasgow is an awfu' deal mair Christian-like than the Pantheon, as far as I can judge; but I wouldna say that it's an idea that ever enters my head to go there for my ain hand to say my prayers; and, as for a country kirk with naked pews and cauld stone——"

"Look at it," said Colin with an air of disgust which was comprehensible enough in a Fellow of Balliol. The church of Lafton was worth looking at. It illustrated with the most wonderful, almost comic, exactness two distinct historic periods. At one end of it was a wonderful Norman chancel, gloomy but magnificent, with its heavy and solemn arches almost as perfect as when they were completed. This chancel had been united to a church of later date (long since demolished) by a lighter and loftier pointed arch, which however, under Colin's incumbency, was filled up with a partition of wood, in which there was a little door giving admission to the church proper, the native and modern expression of ecclesiastical necessities in Scotland. This edifice was like nothing so much as a square box, encircled by a level row of windows high up in the wall, so many

on each side; and there it was that Colin's lofty pulpit, up two pairs of stairs, rigidly and nakedly surveyed the rigorous lines of naked pews which traversed the unlovely area. Colin regarded this scene of his labours with a disgust so melancholy, yet so comical, that his companion, though not much given to mirth, gave forth a laugh which rang into the amazed and sombre echoes. "Yes, it is easy enough to laugh," said Colin, who was not without a sense of the comic side of his position; "but, if it was your own church——"

"Whisht, callant," said Lauderdale, whose amusement was momentary; "if I had ever come to onything in this world, and had a kirk, I wouldna have been so fanciful. It's well for you to get your lesson written out so plain. There's nae place to speak of here for the prayers and the thanksgivings. I'm no saying but what they are the best, but that's no our manner of regarding things in Scotland. Even the man that has maist set his heart on a revolution must aye begin with things as they are. This is no a place open at a' times to every man that has a word to say to God in quietness, like yon Catholic chapels. It's a place for preaching; and you maun preach."

"Preach!" said Colin; "what am I to preach? What I have learned here and there, in Dichopftenburg for example, or in the Divinity Hall? and much the better they would all be for that. Besides, I don't believe in preaching, Lauderdale. Preaching never did me the least service. As for that beastly pulpit perched up there, all wood and noise as it is——" but here Colin paused, overcome by the weight of his discontent, and the giddiness natural to his terrible fall.

"Well," said Lauderdale, after a pause, "I'm no saying but what there's some justice in what you say; but I would like to hear, with your ideas, what you're meaning to do."

To which Colin answered with a groan. "Preach," he said gloomily; "there is nothing else I can do: preach them to death, I suppose: preach about everything in heaven and earth; it is all a priest is good for here."

"Ay," said Lauderdale; "and then the worst o't is that you're no a priest, but only a minister. I wouldna say, however, but what you might pluck up a heart and go into the singing business, and maybe have a process in the presbytery about an organ; that's the form that reformation takes in our kirk, especially with young ministers that have travelled and cultivated their minds, like you. But, Colin," said the philosopher, "you've been in more places than the Divinity Hall. There was once a time when you were awfu' near dying, if a man daur say the truth now it's a' past; and there was once a bit little cham'er out yonder, between heaven and earth."

Out yonder. Lauderdale gave a little jerk with his hand, as he stood at the open door, across the grey, level country which lay between the parish church of Lafton and the sea; and the words and the gesture conveyed Colin suddenly to the lighted window that shone feebly over the Campagna, and to the talk within over Meredith's deathbed. The recollection brought a wonderful change over his thoughts. He took his friend's arm in silence, when he had locked the door. "I wonder what *he* is doing," said Colin. "I wonder whether the reality has fallen short of the expectation there. If there should be no golden gates or shining streets as yet, but only another kind of life with other hopes and trials! If one could but know!"

"Ay," said Lauderdale, in the tone that Colin knew so well; and then there was a long pause. "I'm no saying but what it's natural," said the philosopher. "It's aye awfu' hard upon a man to get his ain way; but once in a while there's one arises that can take the good out of all that. You'll no make Scotland of your way of thinking, Colin; but you'll make it worth her while to have brought ye forth for a' that. As for Arthur, poor callant, I wouldna say but his ideal may have changed a wee on the road there. I'm awfu' indifferent to the shining streets for my part; but I'm no indifferent to them that bide

yonder in the silence," said Lauderdale, and then he made another pause. "There was one now that wasna in your case," he went on; "*he* was aye pleased to teach in season and out of season. For the sake of the like of him, I'm whiles moved to hope that a's no so awfu' perfect in the other world as we think. I canna see ony ground for it in the Bible. Naething ever comes to an end in this world, callant;—and that was just what I was meaning to ask in respect to other things."

"I don't know what you mean by other things," said Colin; "that is, if you mean Miss Meredith, Lauderdale, I have heard nothing of her for years. That must be concluded to have come to an end if anything ever did. It is not for me to subject myself to rejection any more."

Upon which Lauderdale breathed out a long breath which sounded like a sigh, and was visible as well as audible in the frosty air. "It's aye weel to have your lesson written so plain," he said after a minute, with that want of apparent sequence which was sometimes amusing and sometimes irritating to Colin; "it's nae disgrace to a man to do his work under strange conditions. When a lad like you has no place to work in but a pulpit, it's clear to me that God intends him to preach whether he likes it or no."

And this was all the comfort Colin received, in the midst of his disenchantment and discouragement, from his dearest friend.

But before the winter was over life had naturally asserted its rights in the mind of the young minister. He had begun to stretch out his hands for his tools almost without knowing it, and to find that after all a man in a pulpit, although he has two flights of stairs to ascend to it, has a certain power in his hand. Colin found eventually, when he opened his eyes, that he had after all a great deal to say, and that even in one hour in a week it was possible to convey sundry new ideas into the rude, but not stupid, minds of his parishioners. A great many of them had that im-

practicable and hopeless amount of intelligence natural to a well brought-up Scotch peasant, with opinions upon theological matters and a lofty estimate of his own powers; but withal there were many minds open and thoughtful as silence, and the fields, and much observation of the operations of nature could make them. True, there were all the disadvantages to be encountered in Lafton which usually exist in Scotch parishes of the present generation. There was a Free church at the other end of the parish very well filled, and served by a minister who was much more clear in a doctrinal point of view than Colin; and the heritors, for the most part—that is to say, the landowners of the parish—though they were pleased to ask a Fellow of Balliol to dinner, and to show him a great deal of attention, yet drove placidly past his church every Sunday to the English chapel in St. Rule's; which is unhappily the general fortune of the National Church in Scotland. It was on this divided world that Colin looked from his high pulpit, where, at least for his hour, he had the privilege of saying what he pleased without any contradiction; and it is not to be denied that after a while the kingdom of Fife grew conscious to its extremity that in the eastern corner a man had arrived who had undoubtedly something to say. As his popularity began to rise, Colin's ambitions crept back to his heart one by one. He preached the strangest sort of baffling, unorthodox sermons, in which, however, when an adverse critic took notes, there was found to be nothing upon which in these days he could be brought to the bar of the presbytery. Thirty years ago, indeed, matters were otherwise regulated; but even presbyteries have this advantage over popes, that they do take a step forward occasionally to keep in time with their age.

This would be the proper point at which to leave Colin, if there did not exist certain natural, human prejudices on the subject which require a distinct conclusion of one kind or another.

Until a man is dead, it is impossible to say what he has done, or to make any real estimate of his work; and Colin, so far from being dead, is only as yet at the commencement of his career, having taken the first steps with some success and *éclat*, and having recovered the greater part of his enthusiasm. There was, indeed, a time when his friends expected nothing else for him than that early and lovely ending which makes a biography perfect. There is only one other ending in life, which is equally satisfactory, and, at least on the face of it, more cheerful than dying; and that, we need not say, is marriage. Accordingly, as it is impossible to pursue his course to the one end, all that we can do is to turn to the other, which, though the hero himself was not aware of it, was at that moment shadowing slowly out of the morning clouds.

It is accordingly with a feeling of relief that we turn from the little ecclesiastical world of Scotland, where we dare not put ourselves in too rigorous contact with reality, or reveal indiscreetly, without regard to the sanctity of individual confidence, what Colin is doing, to the common open air and daylight, in which he set out, all innocent and unfearing, on a summer morning, accompanied as of old by Lauderdale, upon a holiday voyage. He had not the remotest idea, any more than the readers of his history have at this moment, what was to happen to him before he came back again. He set out with all his revolutionary ideas in his mind, without pausing to think that circumstances might occur which would soften down all insurrectionary impulses on his part, and present him to the alarmed Church, not under the aspect of an irresistible agitator and reformer, but in the subdued character of a man who has given hostages to society. Colin had no thought of this downfall in his imagination when he set out. He had even amused himself with the idea of a new series of "Tracts for the Times," which might peradventure work as much commotion in the Church of Scotland as the former series had



done in the Anglican communion. He went off in full force and energy with the draft of the first of these revolutionary documents in the writing-case in which he had once copied out his verses for Alice Meredith. Poor Alice Meredith! The bridle which Colin had once felt on his neck had worn by this time to such an impalpable thread that he was no longer aware of its existence; and even the woman in the clouds had passed out of his recollection

for the moment, so much was he absorbed with the great work he had embarked on. Thus he set out on a pedestrian excursion, meaning to go to the English lakes, and it is hard to say where besides, in his month's holiday; and nothing in the air or in the skies gave any notice to Colin of the great event that was to befall him before he could return.

*To be continued.*

### PRESIDENT LINCOLN.

IN the course of a recent visit to the United States, the writer of this article had a short interview with President Lincoln, then just re-elected. Public men in America are very good-natured in granting these interviews even to people who have no business to transact with them; or rather perhaps the sovereign people is too exacting in requiring that its public servants shall always be accessible to every one who chooses to call. This tax upon their time is particularly burdensome, because, there being no regular civil service, they have no adequate assistance in the details of the work, which are cast, far more than they ought to be, upon the chief of the department. The White House and the departments of State have been judiciously placed at a considerable distance from the Capitol, to prevent members of Congress from perpetually dropping in upon the President and the members of the Cabinet. But probably a very large part of the morning of each of these functionaries is consumed in interviews which do not in any way promote the public service.

You pass into the President's room of business through an anteroom, which has, no doubt, been paced by many an applicant for office and many an intriguer. There is no formality—nothing in the shape of a guard; and, if this man is really “a tyrant worse than

Robespierre,” he must have great confidence in the long-sufferance of his kind. The room is a common office-room—the only ornament that struck the writer's eye being a large photograph of John Bright. The President's face and figure are well known by likenesses and caricatures. The large-boned and sinewy frame, six feet four inches in height, is probably that of the yeoman of the north of England—the district from which Lincoln's name suggests that his forefathers came—made spare and gaunt by the climate of America. The face, in like manner, denotes an English yeoman's solidity of character and good sense, with something super-added from the enterprising life and sharp habits of the Western Yankee. The brutal fidelity of the photograph, as usual, has given the features of the original, but left out the expression. It is one of kindness, and, except when specially moved to mirth, of seriousness and care. The manner and address are perfectly simple, modest, and unaffected, and therefore free from vulgarity in the eyes of all who are not vulgar themselves.

There was nothing in the conversation particularly worth repeating. It turned partly on the incidents of the recent election. The President was trying to make out from the polls, which had then not perfectly come in, whether the number of electors had diminished since

the beginning of the war; and he flattered himself that it had not. His mind seemed to have been dwelling on this point. He remarked that, in reckoning the number of those who had perished in the war, a fair per-centage must be deducted for ordinary mortality, which would have carried off under any circumstances a certain proportion of the men, all of whom were generally set down as victims of the sword. He also remarked that very exaggerated accounts of the carnage had been produced by including among the killed large numbers of men whose term of enlistment had expired, and who had been on that account replaced by others, or had re-enlisted themselves; and he told in illustration of this remark one of his characteristic stories:—"A negro had 'been learning arithmetic. Another 'negro asked him, if he shot at three 'pigeons sitting on a fence and killed 'one, how many would remain. 'One,' replied the arithmetician. 'No,' said 'the other negro, 'the other two would 'fly away.'" In the course of the conversation he told two or three more of these stories—if stories they could be called,—always by way of illustrating some remark he had made, rather than for the sake of the anecdote itself. The writer recognised in this propensity, as he thought, not a particularly jocular temperament, much less an addiction to brutal levity, such as would call for a comic song among soldiers' graves, but the humour of the West, and especially of a Western man accustomed to address popular audiences, and to enforce his ideas by vivid and homely illustrations. You must have studied the American character—and indeed the English character of which it is the offspring—very superficially if you do not know that a certain levity of expression, in speaking even of important subjects, is perfectly compatible with great earnestness and seriousness beneath. The language of the President, like his demeanour, was perfectly simple; he did not let fall a single coarse or vulgar phrase, and all his words had a meaning.

"A brutal boor" is the epithet applied

to the twice-elected representative of the American nation by certain English journals and the assiduous repetition of this and equivalent phrases has probably fixed that idea of Mr. Lincoln in the minds of the unreflecting mass of our people. Those who hold this language, reason—in ignorance of the man and of the class to which he belongs—from the undeniable fact that he was the son of a poor Western farmer, brought up in a log cabin, and living, till past the age of twenty, by the labour of his hands; which perhaps still retain, in the unaristocratic size often noticed by critics, the traces of their former toil. He eagerly sought knowledge, however; borrowed the books which he could not afford to buy; and made one of them his own, according to a current anecdote, by three days' hard work in pulling fodder. From the work of a farm labourer he rose to that of a clerk in a store, was for a short time a surveyor, and at last became a lawyer. His associates, of course, were Western farmers; but Western farmers, though inferior in polish, are probably not inferior in knowledge to English squires. They are as ignorant of Latin and Greek as the English squire generally is two years after leaving college; but they know a good many things which are not included in the squire's education. A friend of the writer, travelling in the West, was at a loss to explain to his companion the principle of the electric telegraph: their hired driver, overhearing the discussion, turned round and gave a perfectly correct explanation. The writer himself has conversed with men of the President's class and district, on subjects both of politics and religion; and he certainly, to say the least, would be slow to conclude that any one to whom they looked up must be in intellect a boor. On the political questions which concern them these farmers are probably as shrewd and intelligent as any set of men in the world. They are great readers of newspapers, and eager attendants at political meetings. Not unfrequently, in an electoral contest, the two candidates, instead of addressing their partisans separately, make their can-

vassing tour together, and speak against each other, at the different stations of the electoral district, before the electors of both sides. A chairman is appointed to moderate, and the disputation is carried on with order and good humour. Such an exercise must at least force a politician to think clearly. Mr. Lincoln encountered Douglas, the great champion of the democratic party, in a series of these tournaments during the canvass of 1858, and the ability which he then showed laid the foundation of his national reputation. It has been pretended by correspondents of the English press that his speeches were made for him by reporters sent down by his party; but it is not very likely that Mr. Douglas and his friends would have allowed fictitious speeches to be substituted for those which their opponent really made. The story is merely an instance of the determination to maintain the theory that the President of the United States is nothing but a boor.

That he is something more than a boor his address at the dedication of the cemetery at Gettysburg will in itself be sufficient to prove. The greatest orator of the United States pronounced on that occasion a long, elaborate, and very eloquent discourse, with all that grace of delivery by which he is distinguished. The President, with a very ungainly manner, said these words:—

“Fourscore and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

“Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that or any nation so conceived and so dedicated can long endure. We are met on a great battle-field of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field as a final resting-place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

“But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember, what we say here; but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us, the living, rather to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly

advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us; that from these honoured dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion; that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain; that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom; and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.”

There are one or two phrases here, such as “dedicated to the proposition,” which betray a hand untrained in fine writing, and are proofs that the composition is Lincoln’s own. But, looking to the substance, it may be doubted whether any king in Europe would have expressed himself more royally than the peasant’s son. And, even as to the form, we cannot help remarking that simplicity of structure and pregnancy of meaning are the true characteristics of the classical style. Is it easy to believe that the man who had the native good taste to produce this address would be capable of committing gross indecencies—that he would call for comic songs to be sung over soldiers’ graves?

Mr. Lincoln is not a highly cultivated politician; and it is much to be lamented that he is not; for he will have to deal, in the course of reconstruction, with political problems requiring for their solution all the light that political science and history can afford. Like American statesmen in general, he is no doubt entirely unversed in the principles of economy and finance; and it is quite credible that he may be, as is reported, the author of the strange scheme for raising money by issuing a kind of stock which shall not be liable to seizure for debt. But within the range of his knowledge and vision, which does not extend beyond the constitution, laws, and political circumstances of his own country, he is a statesman. He distinctly apprehends the fundamental principles of the community at the head of which he is placed, and enunciates them, whenever there is occasion, with a breadth and clearness which gives them fresh validity. He keeps his main object—the preservation of the Union and the Constitution—distinctly in view, and steadily

directs all his actions to it. If he suffers himself to be guided by events, it is not because he loses sight of principles, much less because he is drifting, but because he deliberately recognises in events the manifestation of moral forces, which he is bound to consider, and the behests of Providence, which he is bound to obey. He neither floats at random between the different sections of his party, nor does he abandon himself to the impulse of any one of them, whether it be that of the extreme Abolitionists or that of the mere Politicians; but he treats them all as elements of the Union party, which it is his task to hold together, and conduct as a combined army to victory. To do him justice, you must read his political writings and speeches,<sup>1</sup> looking to the substance and not to the style, which, in the speeches especially, is often very uncultivated, though it never falls into the worse faults of inflation and rhodomontade so common in American State-papers. Perhaps his letter to Mr. Hodges, a member of a deputation from Kentucky, explaining his course on the subject of slavery, is as good a specimen as can be selected.

"EXECUTIVE MANSION, WASHINGTON,  
"April 4th, 1864.

"A. G. HODGES, Esq. Frankfort, Ky.

"MY DEAR SIR,—You ask me to put in writing the substance of what I verbally said the other day, in your presence, to Governor Bramlette and Senator Dixon. It was about as follows:—

"I am naturally anti-slavery. If slavery is not wrong, nothing is wrong. I cannot remember when I did not so think and feel, and yet I have never understood that the Presidency conferred upon me an unrestricted right to act officially upon this judgment and feeling. It was in the oath I took that I would to the best of my ability preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States. I could

not take the office without taking the oath. Nor was it my view that I might take an oath to get power, and break the oath in using the power. I understood, too, that in ordinary civil administration this oath even forbade me to practically indulge my primary abstract judgment on the moral question of slavery. I had publicly declared this many times, and in many ways. And I aver that, to this day, I have done no official act in mere deference to my abstract judgment and feeling on slavery. I did not understand, however, that my oath to preserve the Constitution to the best of my ability imposed upon me the duty of preserving, by every indispensable means, that government, that nation, of which that Constitution was the organic law. Was it possible to lose the nation and yet preserve the Constitution? By general law, life and limb must be protected; yet often a limb must be amputated to save a life; but a life is never wisely given to save a limb. I felt that measures, otherwise unconstitutional, might become lawful, by becoming indispensable to the preservation of the Constitution, through the preservation of the nation. Right or wrong, I assumed this ground, and now avow it. I could not feel that, to the best of my ability, I had even tried to preserve the Constitution, if, to save slavery, or any minor matter, I should permit the wreck of government, country, and constitution, altogether. When, early in the war, General Fremont attempted military emancipation, I forbade it, because I did not then think it an indispensable necessity. When, a little later, General Cameron, then secretary of war, suggested the arming of the blacks, I objected, because I did not yet think it an indispensable necessity. When, still later, General Hunter attempted military emancipation, I again forbade it, because I did not yet think the indispensable necessity had come. When, in March and May, and July, 1862, I made earnest and successive appeals to the Border states to favour compensated emancipation, I believed the indispensable necessity for military emancipation and arming the blacks would come, unless averted by that measure. They declined the proposition, and I was, in my best judgment, driven to the alternative of either surrendering the Union, and with it, the Constitution, or of laying strong hand upon the coloured element. I chose the latter. In choosing it, I hoped for greater gain than loss, but of this I was not entirely confident. More than a year of trial shows no loss by it in our foreign relations, none in our home popular sentiment, none in our white military force, no loss by it anyhow, or anywhere. On the contrary, it shows a gain of quite a hundred and thirty thousand soldiers, seamen, and labourers. These are palpable facts, about which, as facts, there can be no cavilling. We have the men; and we could not have had them without the measure.

"And now let any Union man who com-

<sup>1</sup> Those political writings which emanate from himself alone. In his Messages to the Legislature his ministers have a hand. The part of the last message, for example, relating to Foreign Affairs, in which, by way of asserting American independence and greatness, the great powers of Europe are ignored, and the half-barbarous impotencies of South America brought into the foreground, may be safely pronounced to be the work of a subtler genius than that of the President.

plaints of the measure test himself by writing down in one line, that he is for subduing the rebellion by force of arms, and, in the next, that he is for taking three hundred and thirty thousand men from the Union side, and placing them where they would be best for the measure he condemns. If he cannot face his case so stated, it is only because he cannot face the truth.

"I add a word which was not in the verbal conversation. In telling this tale, I attempt no compliment to my own sagacity. I claim not to have controlled events, but confess plainly that events have controlled me. Now, at the end of three years' struggle, the nation's condition is not what either party, or any man, devised or expected. God alone can claim it. Whither it is tending seems plain. If God now wills the removal of a great wrong, and wills also that we of the North, as well as you of the South, shall pay fairly for our complicity in that wrong, impartial history will find therein new causes to attest and revere the justice and goodness of God.

"Yours truly,

(Signed) "A. LINCOLN."

Few will deny that a modest and patient sagacity finds its expression here.

Like most of the Western republicans, Lincoln belonged not to the extreme Abolitionists, but to the party who resisted the extension of slavery; and of the principles of this party he was a steady and unflinching advocate. His course, therefore, on this subject, has been consistent throughout.

The religious sentiment expressed in the last paragraph of the letter pervades all the President's productions; and it seems to be genuine. He is no Puritan: it is said that in Illinois, among his rough and jovial companions, he is, in conversation at least, rather the reverse—but he has a real sense of the presence and providence of God; and this feeling has probably helped to keep him, as he has been, calm in peril and temperate in success. It is curious to contrast the following passage, giving his idea of the revelations of Providence to rulers, with the language of Cromwell and the Puritan chiefs on the same subject. The passage occurs in an answer to a deputation from the churches at Chicago, which had pressed upon him the policy of immediate emancipation:—

"The subject presented in the memorial is one upon which I have thought much for

weeks past, and I may even say for months. I am approached with the most opposite opinions and advice, and that by religious men, who are equally certain that they represent the Divine will. I am sure that either the one or the other class is mistaken in that belief, and perhaps in some respect both. I hope it will not be irreverent for me to say that, if it is probable that God would reveal His will to others on a point so connected with my duty, it might be supposed He would reveal it directly to me; for, unless I am more deceived in myself than I often am, it is my earnest desire to know the will of Providence in this matter. And if I can learn what it is I will do it! These are not, however, the days of miracles, and I suppose it will be granted that I am not to expect a direct revelation. I must study the plain physical facts of the case, ascertain what is possible, and learn what appears to be wise and right."

No calumny, to all appearance, can be more grotesque than that which charges Mr. Lincoln with aiming at arbitrary power. Judging from all that he says and does, no man can be more deeply imbued with reverence for liberty and law, or more sincerely desirous of identifying his name with the preservation of free institutions. He sanctioned, though he did not originate, the military arrests; but he did so in the conscientious belief that the power was given him by the constitution, and that the circumstances had arisen in which it was necessary to exercise it for the salvation of the State. His justification of these acts is scrupulously and anxiously constitutional. To the remonstrants who tell him that the safeguards of habeas corpus and trial by jury "were secured substantially to the English people after years of protracted civil war, and were adopted into our constitution at the close of the revolution," he replies, "Would not the demonstration have been better if it could have been truly said that these safeguards had been adopted and applied during the civil war and during our revolution, instead of after the one and at the close of the other? I too am devotedly for them after civil war and before civil war, and at all times 'except when in cases of rebellion or invasion the public safety may require their suspension.'" The words he here quotes are from the Constitution; and



they ought to be known to those who accuse Mr. Lincoln of flagrant and inexcusable usurpation.

The effects of Mr. Lincoln's legal training are visible both in his mode of reasoning on constitutional questions, and in the occasional acuteness of his replies to objectors, of which the sentence last quoted is a specimen. But, fortunately for him, he entered the legal profession rather late, when he had had time to form his character and understanding on an unprofessional basis.

Few, even of those who call him a tyrant and an usurper, have ventured to charge him with personal cruelty. It is scarcely possible to obtain his consent to the execution of a deserter or a spy. He has set his heart on carrying through the revolution, if possible, without shedding any blood except on the field of battle. This is the more creditable to his humanity, since it is believed, and he shares that belief, that an attempt was made to assassinate him at Baltimore immediately after his first election.

That he has made mistakes in his choice of men, especially of military men, is not to be denied. In fact, as regards the military appointments, nothing could direct him or any one else to the right men except the criterion of experience, fearfully costly as it was. It is true that he has, in some cases, appointed men to military commands from political motives; but the political motives were connected, it is believed, not with personal or party jobbery, but with the necessities, real or supposed, of the public service. Sigel, for example, was appointed to the command in which he failed, because the Germans, whose idol he was, would not serve so readily under any other general. No soldier who had really proved himself competent has been passed over, though the President's good nature has delayed the removal of those whose incompetence had appeared.

It is another current fiction that the President is excessively garrulous, and "always on the balcony." Most Ame-

rican statesmen are open to this imputation; but the President is an exception. "I am very little inclined on any occasion to say anything unless I hope to 'produce some good by it.'" To this maxim, from the time of his election, he has very steadily adhered; and perhaps it would be difficult to show that he had ever made an uncalled-for speech, or, when called upon to speak, said more than the occasion required.

There is another great meed of praise to which Mr. Lincoln is entitled. Chief of a party in one of the most desperate struggles of history, he has never, by anything that has fallen from his lips, gratuitously increased the bitterness of civil war. His answer to those who came to congratulate him on his re-election was thoroughly generous, chivalrous, and patriotic. He "did not wish to triumph over any man." He "had never wilfully planted a thorn in any man's bosom." It is true that he has not.

Our great public instructor told us the other day that Lincoln's re-election was perhaps on the whole the best thing that could have happened for this country, because, having already said as much against England as was necessary to secure to him the Irish vote, he had probably exhausted his malignity on that subject. All who know the simplest facts of American politics are aware that to talk of Mr. Lincoln's securing the Irish vote is about as rational as it would be to talk of Lord Derby's securing the vote of the Chartists. But Mr. Lincoln, it is believed, is one of the few public men in America who have never joined, or affected to join, in the profligate denunciations of England which were a part of the regular stock-in-trade of the Democratic party, and of the slaveowners who were its chiefs. Whether he is a great man or not, he is at least an honest one; he can feel responsibility; and his re-election was to be desired not only for the good of his country, but for the peace of the world.

GOLDWIN SMITH.

## STATE MEDICINE

BY FRANCIS E. ANSTIE, M.D.

THE subject of my paper can only be sketched in outline; the materials for a full description and discussion of it do not exist: yet it is of such manifest importance even at the present moment, and is certain to fill so large a space in the public mind at no distant date, that we can hardly be too early familiarised with its chief features.

The present is an age of new wants. In no quarter is this more evident than in the department of what may be called the domestic management of the nation by the government. It has rather suddenly become plain to everybody that for the state to decline to interfere or to inquire about such matters as the bodily habits and health of its members is not "in favour of liberty," but in favour simply of immorality, dirt, disease, and death. Of necessity the chief burden of the work thus created falls on medical men; and very thankfully does the profession accept the public acknowledgment that a new sphere of duty and usefulness is open to it. We doctors have no very affectionate reminiscences of the days when the public scarcely recognised us in any other capacity than as the prescribers of nasty drugs, and the maintainers of shadowy theories. Since Jenner's time, at least, the dullest on-looker can perceive the vast practical benefits which medical science can render to the state; and the consciousness of this fact has given us, as a body, a seriousness and dignity, and at the same time a scientific modesty, which indicate a real advance, it may be hoped, on the pretensions of former days.

There is slowly growing up a relation of the medical profession to the state which few persons take the pains to follow out to its inevitable results. It seems very natural that if a cesspool smells badly, some doctor should be asked

whether there is not a danger that disease may attack the people who live in the neighbourhood; or that, when a strong man dies in convulsions half-an-hour after he has taken a meal, a jury should desire medical testimony as to the probability of his having been poisoned. It is not so obvious, but it is nevertheless true, that the duty of the medical man is in both cases substantially the same, and that the function which he performs on this and many other occasions which occur now-a-days is of a highly peculiar kind, and has scarcely, if at all, been realized by the educational bodies which train medical students, or the corporations which examine them as to their fitness to practise. The doctor is expected, in these cases, to give evidence *as an expert*. If he were asked his opinion as to the health of a patient, it would be of comparatively little consequence, in most cases, what he answered, because he, and not the patient, would have to take action on that opinion. But, when he is questioned by the state, it is the state (that is, an unlearned body) which must act upon his words. In the first case he is a *vates* speaking dark things; in the second he is an interpreter, translating into the vulgar tongue the dark things of science.

Three things seem to be chiefly necessary in order that a scientific man may duly perform this function of interpreter. First, he must be assisted by the organized co-operation of fellow-workers. Secondly, he must have enjoyed a peculiar education, embracing not merely facts and opinions belonging to his own science, but also a knowledge of the laws of evidence. Thirdly, he must be entirely independent of social pressure.

The first of these requisites is called for by the immense range and extreme difficulty of the various branches of

knowledge on which the scientific witness is liable to be questioned. This renders it necessary that the most effective means should be adopted for preserving for the common use any scrap of information on these matters which may at any time transpire, and that workers in these subjects should constantly compare notes of their experience from an unimpassioned and disinterested point of view. The second requisite—that of a special education—is demanded by the necessity of placing oneself on a level with the intelligence of the unlearned questioner—a most difficult task. The third is absolutely necessary as a guarantee for impartiality and the avoidance of unconscious misrepresentation.

It is obvious that the profession as a body does not possess these qualifications for the peculiar duties of scientific instructors of the state. To credit the average general practitioner, pure surgeon, or pure physician, with such qualifications, would be transparent flattery, for neither the special literature which we possess, nor the requirements of our educating and examining bodies, nor the relations in which the majority of practitioners are placed towards society, afford any means for their attainment. To take one instance out of many: How frequently does the state require information in questions of lunacy—a subject on which there exists hardly the commencement of a literature, which is taught in almost none of our schools, and examined on by almost none of our licensing bodies, and which more than any other involves questions in which the private interests and feelings of the practitioner are frequently engaged. That mistakes are sometimes committed is not at all wonderful under the circumstances; the only wonder is that they are not constantly occurring. The medical profession may certainly be proud of the general behaviour of its members under the stress of most difficult duties suddenly thrown upon them. But a few years since the diseases of the mind were scarcely recognised by the public as belonging specially to the care of doctors: lunacy was a condition the

management of which was for the most part relegated to the charge of ignorant amateurs. Reform in these ideas has been brought about by the efforts of a few eminent physicians, and now the public not only encourages doctors to assume the treatment of mental affections, but thrusts upon them the most onerous and responsible labours in connexion with this department of pathology, and is inclined to treat with great severity any lapses in the fulfilment of these new functions. The demeanour of the public, and especially of the lawyers, towards doctors in respect of questions of lunacy reminds one of the “venerable rustic, strongheaded but incurably obstinate in his prejudices,” of whom De Quincey relates that he treated the whole medical profession as ignorant pretenders, knowing absolutely nothing of the system which they professed to superintend, and yet every third day was exacting from his own medical attendants some exquisite *tour de force*, as that they should know or should do something which, if they *had* known or done, all men would have suspected them reasonably of magic. In short, the whole position of affairs is characteristic of a transition period, which cannot last. Either the medical profession must be entirely relieved of all judicial duties with regard to insane persons, or the state must assist it to perform these duties efficiently, since the community at large is partly responsible for the difficulties in which medical men are placed with regard to these matters.

If to the enormously difficult subject of lunacy we add the questions of sanitary police and of special evidence on criminal trials, we shall find that here is a branch of science which might well occupy the whole attention of the ablest medical man, and which it is idle to suppose can be mastered by men immersed in the details of ordinary practice. And, accordingly, in that confused and unscientific manner which belongs to the motions of society in countries where the principle of “private enterprise” is allowed its fullest sway, we have commenced attempts to remedy the existing

evils. A class of experts, more or less distinctly separated from the common sphere of medical work, and devoted to the instruction of the state on scientific questions, has actually arisen. Of these specialists it may with confidence be said that the most efficient are those who have most completely devoted themselves to their specialty; and this is a very important fact for us. For the question begins to force itself upon the attention of some thinkers—whether it were not best to organize a department of state medicine, the officers of which should have given evidence of a sound general knowledge of medicine, and also of a special acquaintance with the peculiar duties which have been mentioned, to which duties their attention should be thenceforth confined? To this question I do not pretend to give a final answer. Believing, however, that the evils for which it suggests a remedy must needs go on increasing unless something is done in the way of *organized* reform, I wish to help this proposal to gain further publicity, in order that it may be studied as fully as possible, and that the *pros* and *cons* may be duly weighed.

A proposal to invite government interference with scientific men is so serious a matter that its promoters are bound to show a strong *prima facie* case, in the nature of a grave scandal existing. Nothing short of this would induce Englishmen, who have witnessed the magnificent development of science under the system of self-government which this country cherishes, to legislate in the proposed direction. I shall therefore proceed to show, I. That such a scandal does exist; and II. That, while it is unreasonable to expect the *profession* to provide an efficient remedy for it, there is ground for thinking that the *state* might do so.

I. The present administration of state medicine is discreditable. It is possible to prove this with regard to the working of nearly every department in which the state requires scientific *opinion* rather than practical scientific *action* from medical men.

1. With regard to the action of

"health officers," like those appointed in the various districts of the metropolis, none can pretend that adequate results are produced by the machinery employed. As the practical management of sanitary reforms is after all left in the hands of the vestrymen, who elect their own medical officer, many abuses will creep in. In the first place it is obvious that a vestry may, and probably sometimes will, select an officer not merely inferior to some others proposed, but absolutely devoid of any qualifications whatever for the office; and secondly, although in most cases our metropolitan health officers are able and in some cases very eminent men, yet the fact that they are controlled in their action by a body of men whose material interests in many cases are likely to be opposed to the carrying out of sanitary reforms, however urgently needed, is a strong reason why their action must be comparatively inefficient. No one who knows the practical working of the system can doubt that this is really the case; much good work has been done, but the sanitary evils of the metropolis are only scratched on the surface. Even in comparatively respectable neighbourhoods, there are whole streets whose inhabitants huddle together like rats, liable to be decimated by any contagious epidemic that may come their way, and scarce vitalised enough to offer common resistance to the simplest attack of acute disease. What does the reader think of such a case as this: a long row of houses built with their backs against a wall, and thus without any thorough ventilation whatever, the back rooms on each floor being mere cupboards without light or air; the other sanitary arrangements in perfect harmony with such a state of things, and the whole place, from garret to cellar, crowded with families of lodgers? I could tell him of such cases, where the medical officer would be powerless to induce any efficient action on the part of the vestry, at least without embroiling himself to an unpleasant and dangerous extent with that august body. And, if London is but moderately supplied with the means of scientifically reforming

its sanitary faults, what shall we say of the rural villages, from which there has lately gone forth an odour of physical and moral foulness that has startled even the most apathetic of us? Why, simply that (as a rule) they are not supplied at all, at least with any provision that deserves the name. What local officer of health, parish doctor, or any such functionary, under existing circumstances, could venture to state, with the necessary official cold-bloodedness, the naked truth about the condition of labourers' dwellings (not in general but) on a particular estate? The idea is obviously impracticable. The case of food-adulterations is another instance of the inefficiency of the aid at present rendered by science to the state. Every one, since the revelations of the Lancet Sanitary Commission, is aware how extensive, and in many cases injurious, these adulterations are; but to hope for efficient reform by the help of any machinery at present existing would be visionary. How could an officer of health report on the sand in the sugar or currants sold by an important vestryman or guardian, supposing him to be dependent on that individual and his friends for continuance in his public office, and also for employment in his private capacity? The very reason why one department of food-inspection—that of meat, fish, poultry, &c.—really is worked with some efficiency exactly illustrates the unfitness of any medical man engaged in ordinary practice to exercise censorial duties over the provision shops generally. This inquisition is effective because the weight and burden can be assumed by a lay inspector, who is in a comparatively independent position, not having to make his livelihood out of the favour of the general public; while the medical officer is only consulted as a referee, the strictly scientific questions being few and generally simple. But for an effective inspection of provisions generally scientific knowledge would be constantly required, and the burden of the work must fall upon the medical officer; yet how could he report with conscientious

candour on the shortcomings of his vestrymen and his patients?

2. The next class of duties which medical men are supposed to render to the state, but which are inefficiently performed, is the furnishing of information as to the causes of deaths occurring in their districts. It is now well known by all statisticians who have considered the subject that our national system of death-registration (considered as a complete record) is a mockery and delusion. This is not so much from carelessness on the part of doctors as from the fact that in an immense number of instances they are never appealed to at all, but the ignorant lay-registrar, wishing to gain a character for zeal, evolves the cause of death which he assigns in the certificate out of his own moral consciousness.

Closely connected with this subject is that of the non-registration of still births; a practice which the law allows to go on, although it has been repeatedly denounced as a fertile source of infanticide. It is obvious that, if the medical profession is ever to give really reliable information to the state on this matter of the cause of deaths, it can only be done by the whole business of death-registration offices being placed in the hands of medical men; but, if this were once arranged, we might hope not merely for greatly increased accuracy of information on such questions as we already require to be answered, but most valuable suggestions for improvements of the laws which bear on the personal comfort, health, and safety of our citizens.

3. With regard to the manner in which medical evidence is taken on coroners' inquests, it is almost impossible to overstate the evils of the present system. Our best example, perhaps, will be one which is of very frequent occurrence, namely, the investigation of a case where there is room for suspicion of infanticide, the proof turning mainly on the question whether the child was live-born? The majority of such cases present physiological problems of the deepest kind, such as would require an



expert of the highest knowledge and skill to investigate them successfully, and a rather unusual power of interpretation to convey to laymen a just idea of the points of certainty and of uncertainty involved. The long and peculiar study of this subject from two quite distinct points of view—the medical and legal—which would be necessary in order to achieve this kind of success, makes it quite impossible that a busy practitioner, fully engaged with ordinary duties, can acquire it. It needs but a slight cross-examination from an incredulous coroner to break down the credit of such a witness, for in nine cases out of ten his opinion (whether right or wrong) will be found to have been based, not on a comprehensive survey and accurate analysis of *all* the scientific indications, but on the result of some specific test which he believes to be crucial, when it may be merely an exploded fallacy. This is an especial danger of medico-legal inquiry in cases of infanticide. The consequences are most disastrous to the cause of justice, and highly conducive to the spread of crime. Juries are now for the most part very distrustful of such evidence, and, where it bears against an actual prisoner, will eagerly seek any loophole to escape from the fatal inference which it suggests—a proceeding all the more easy as, in the present state of the law as to child-murder, the public sympathy is nearly always on the side of the accused. It is impossible to doubt that this laxity of repression has much to do with the enormous prevalence of infanticide, which is an undoubted and most dreadful fact—a stain on our civilization, which has been repeatedly though vainly denounced.

4. In criminal trials a variety of questions arise in which medical evidence forms the turning-point, of which perhaps the most frequently occurring and most important are inquiries into the relation of particular symptoms to the effects of poison. The condition of an ordinary practitioner, unskilled in this kind of investigation, when placed in circumstances where he must give a

decided opinion on such a question, is most pitiable. He may have gained a correct enough idea of the case by mental operations, which are, so to speak, irregular—that is to say, they do not admit of being analysed and laid bare to a smart, confident, and hostile barrister, and a jury entirely unfamiliar with medical subjects. His explanation of the manner in which he arrived at his opinion on the case may with ease be made to appear ridiculous and inconsistent, whereas his deficiency was not in sound knowledge and judgment, but in the power to translate his thoughts into those of unlearned men. Too often, however, it must be allowed that the average practitioner is not possessed of the special knowledge which alone could confer the right to pronounce a decided opinion on such cases. But it is strange to see how nearly universal is the habit of assuming that, provided an expert has the requisite knowledge of special facts, his giving evidence involves no more difficulty than every common witness experiences, when, in fact, there is a difference between the two cases almost as great as between light and darkness. Let any one study with care some text-book of the laws of evidence (such, for instance, as the chapters on evidence in Mr. Fitzjames Stephen's admirable work on the "Criminal Law of England"), and he will perceive that the examination of testimony in courts of law is necessarily guided by an elaborate theory and by special rules of practice, which it requires the skill and knowledge that a special study alone can confer to employ with effect in eliciting the true value of the statements of a witness. For dealing with common facts the kind of knowledge and skill possessed by an acute counsel is doubtless the best preparation. But it is quite impossible for counsel to have any idea how to assist or to compel a scientific witness to that *castigatio trutinæ* which should make the naked truth (so far as known to science) appear, stripped of the vestments of private theory and speculative crotchet.

I am compelled to demur to the very high estimate which Mr. Stephen has placed on the value of cross-examination in this respect; and, lest I should seem to speak rashly, I will give a specific and forcible instance of the correctness of my view. On the trial of Smethurst one of the most important questions was as to the possibility or otherwise of Miss Bankes's symptoms having been caused by *dysentery*. Looking back on the hubbub of contradictions which arose on this point, it is difficult to realize the fact—which, nevertheless, assuredly is a fact—that the whole matter really lay in a nutshell. The question on this point was, Does English dysentery ever cause a totality of symptoms such as Miss Bankes suffered from. One witness declared that he had seen many cases of dysentery in this country presenting severe symptoms and ending fatally. The circumstance which I desire to point out is this—that it never occurred to counsel to inquire, in cross-examination of this witness, (a) whether his fatal cases had not uniformly occurred in persons who had previously visited a tropical country and suffered from dysentery there; and (b) whether there was reason to believe that Miss Bankes had ever resided within the tropics, or contracted tropical disease? The least learned person can see that that was a great blunder; yet it was precisely what might be expected from a layman dealing with the intricacies of science.

But the crowning offence against justice and common sense, in the reception of medical testimony on trials, consists in allowing and indeed requiring it to be given *ex parte*, the universal practice in this country. Experience has abundantly proved that by such a method of taking skilled evidence (whether medical, or engineering, or of any other kind) nothing but a mass of contradiction will be obtained; but the worth of medical testimony is especially damaged by it, because medical problems are considerably farther removed than others from the scope of ordinary education, and their interpretation is proportionably

more difficult. The most absolute impartiality would be required to enable a witness to execute with complete success the task of opening the eyes of laymen to the exact position of scientific inquiry on many points of toxicology; but the present system excludes the possibility of even a tolerable approach to fairness in any case which is of sufficient interest to provoke a contest. The laws of human nature inexorably forbid us to hope that, with such numerous excuses for forming opinions in a crotchety or theoretical manner as are furnished by medico-legal questions, the average medical witness will ever hold the balance true against the pressure of material interest and the temptation of professional rivalry. There is a cynical insincerity in pretending to expect any such result, which deserves grave reprobation. It is certain that, until means shall be provided for obtaining scientific evidence which has been formed apart from the injurious pressure of interested considerations, we are only making believe to elicit the truth so far as it can be decided on scientific grounds.

5. Passing by some minor functions which medicine might perform for the state, we come now to the most important and the most miserably neglected of all—the assistance which medical advice should give to the state authorities in questions as to mental unsoundness. The present condition of things in this country, with regard to the forensic aspect of lunacy, is one which our posterity will look back upon with incredulous wonder and disgust. It is confessed by every psychologist who is worth his salt that our knowledge of mental pathology is still in its infancy: at the same time it is known to every observer of the progress of medical science that we have now entered upon a path which must lead to great and valuable discoveries in the future, and has already led to some which are very important. In short, our mental science is in a peculiarly developmental state; that is, in a state which of all others renders it difficult for a layman to discriminate between that which is solid

fact, based on competent experience, and that which is mere opinion. Here, more than ever, do we suffer under an intolerable grievance in the fact that impartiality in the scientific advisers of the state is not merely unprovided for, but is rendered very nearly impossible. Whether the question be one of signing a certificate for the removal of a patient to an asylum, or of informing the Master in Lunacy or a jury as to the capability of an individual to manage his own affairs, matters stand in such a way that the slightest introduction of a hostile element in the shape of conflicting interest at once causes the parties to enlist medical evidence on *their respective sides*; and this is done with a skill which it is chimerical to suppose that the medical body could have the tact and firmness to resist. At least, if some resist, others will certainly comply, and these by no means the least honourable members of the profession. The practice of signing certificates for the committal of patients to houses of restraint is a very important matter, because it is in constant operation, and because it has been made the ground of all kinds of suspicion against the candour and honesty of medical practitioners. The public has a chronic quarrel with "mad-doctors," as the pages of many a sensation novel will testify. It is obvious that nothing would so completely relieve the public mind of uncomfortable feelings on this score as the knowledge that all matters of certificate-signing would be performed by an official unconnected with the patient or his friends, and at the same time qualified by his superior knowledge and experience to make the certificate a really valuable report, instead of what it too often is at present—a hazy, incoherent, and nearly useless document, suggestive (to the Commissioners in Lunacy) of little else than the reflection that "these doctors" are themselves the strangest psychological study which could be found.

Information on all questions of lunacy can only be usefully given to the state by men who have mastered the laws of evidence. These laws, which I have

already referred to in another relation, are especially important in connexion with questions of mental unsoundness. It is the simple truth that without a special and scientific knowledge of them it is a hopeless undertaking, even for one who has had large experience of mental diseases, to attempt to convey to laymen the true state of science on many questions in lunacy. But at present the possession of such knowledge hardly enters at all into the popular conception of the necessary qualifications of a witness in lunacy, and certainly it is not every medical man who has acquired it. It is this kind of ignorance, more than any other, that conduces to the occurrence of scandals like the Townley and Windham affairs.

II. I come now to the practical part of my paper, in which I hope to show that the great evils which disfigure our present administration of state medicine, and which are far too gigantic to be remedied by any unaided efforts on the part of the medical profession, might be removed in great measure, if a helping hand were reached to us from without.

Here is a great mass of work the general characters of which are similar in all its branches; the central feature of all the functions which I have referred to being the reduction of high scientific mysteries to terms of popular intelligibility. At present it is performed in a scattered and disjointed way,—by persons in most cases without special knowledge either of the scientific facts or of the true way of making them intelligible by and useful to the state,—and under the disabling pressure of circumstances which render impartiality almost impossible. It would seem certain that any effective principle of reform must include the consolidation of these functions, the strict limitation of the power to exercise them to men who should be able to give proofs of their possessing the special knowledge required, and the remuneration of such persons in a way which would render them independent of the favour of private individuals. There are many

persons, doubtless, who will be ready at once to declare that any such scheme is Utopian, and its execution impossible. I believe they are mistaken, and that the real Utopianism consists in thinking that the kind of machinery at present in vogue can effectually solve the ever-multiplying difficulties presented by the relations of medical science to the state. Already the amount of work done for the state by medical men (quite exclusive of the medical service of the army and navy, which does not come under the head of state medicine proper) is very considerable, and it is yearly increasing. The powers wielded by the Privy Council—the present representative of the old Board of Health—enable it to set on foot inquiries which must terminate sooner or later in a great development of the application of sanitary science, and of vital statistics, to the prevention of disease. The appointment of inspectors of vaccination may be looked on as one important recent indication of this tendency; the special missions of inquiry into the origin of particular epidemics of disease which have from time to time been sent out is another. The institution of officers of health was a great stride in the same direction. Obviously there must be in the future a great deal of costly work done for the state by the medical profession; it seems worth while, therefore, to inquire whether it were not better for humanity, and ultimately even for humanity's pocket, to include in one department, paid and guaranteed efficient by the state, the various officers whose services advancing civilization will inevitably require? That such an idea is not altogether chimerical has been shown by Mr. H. W. Rumsey in a series of able papers<sup>1</sup> read before the Social Science Association, in which that gentleman took as his text the scandalous inefficiency of our so-called "returns" of birth and death, and which contain many forcible illustrations of the deplorable condition of vital

science and medical police in this country, from a want of any proper organization on the part of those on whom their maintenance and extension depends. The principal feature of Mr. Rumsey's scheme is the appointment of district officers of health, who shall take cognizance of all questions of vital statistics, of sanitary police, and of forensic medicine, which arise within their jurisdiction, who shall possess a special educational qualification guaranteeing their fitness for their office, and who shall be sufficiently remunerated by the state, and expressly debarred from private practice. To the hands of such officers the following duties should be committed:—*A.* The scientific registration of births, of deaths and their causes, and of the amount and kind of sickness occurring in their district. *B.* The inspection of vaccination. *C.* The examination of articles of food and drink, with a view to the detection of adulterations. *D.* The preparation of scientific evidence in all cases of sudden and violent deaths, and in all cases of alleged personal incompetence—whether moral, mental, or physical—for the fulfilment of public or family duties, or of labour contracts, and to detect malingers.

To this scheme must be added its natural complement, the list of suggestions for a special examination in the qualifications for these duties, which candidates for the new offices would be required to have passed. "It can hardly be questioned," says Mr. Rumsey, in a valuable paper which, by his kindness, I have had the opportunity of reading,<sup>1</sup> "that none of the ordinary medical "degrees or diplomas—whether from "Universities or from Medical Colleges "—distinctly express and embody the "special qualifications required. Nor "do any of the courses of instruction, "through which medical students are "obliged to pass, provide adequately for "the acquirement of that exact knowledge of particular subjects which such "officers ought to possess." This is

<sup>1</sup> "Public Health: the Right Use of Records founded on Local Facts." By Henry Wildbore Rumsey. J. W. Parker & Son. 1860.

<sup>1</sup> "A Proposal for the Institution of Degrees in Civil or State Medicine in the Universities of the United Kingdom."

literally true. If Government were ever to adopt the above or any similar scheme, it must necessarily insist on a qualification of its candidates which would compel the addition of special items to the curricula of the colleges, and to the programme of the examiners of even the most *exigante* University. To say the least, it would be necessary to add, even to the most stringent medical examinations known, another in the physical sciences, a searching practical examination in the diagnosis of mental affections (in actual patients), and, finally, an examination on the laws of evidence both by papers and also *vivâ voce*—the latter being conducted by a barrister of standing.

The adoption of any plan which would involve even these changes obviously presents many serious educational difficulties; and, in addition to this, it is certain that the practical obstacles to any legislation tending to interfere with the vested interests which protect the present class of death-registrars and the present autocracy of vestries in sanitary matters would be immense. It is also possible that a certain amount of opposition might be offered by a portion of the medical profession to any measure which took out of their hands such employment as is furnished by the requirements of coroners' inquests and assize trials, or the possible reversion, in some cases, of a vestry appointment as officers of health; but I believe that the feeling of opposition would be but temporary in this case, and that the sense of relief to themselves and benefit to the community would quickly reconcile the rank and file of the profession to an exclusion from duties for which they have had no opportunity of qualifying themselves. I acknowledge to the full all the difficulties which stand in the way of any plan of organization. But the mere statement of these difficulties, if we care to undertake it, forces us to a consideration of the actual state of things from which no intelligent person can rise without the feeling that at any cost reforms will have to be made, and that the sooner

the process of reformation is commenced the better for us all. It may well be that the scheme above propounded (which is merely introduced here as the work of an able man who has had the courage to think this question resolutely out) will be found to require great modifications before it could be practically adopted. For details I must refer the reader to Mr. Rumsey's pamphlet itself; suffice it to say that, with regard to one most important matter, the probable expense of such a scheme, he adduces figures which seem to prove that this might be rendered moderate, indeed quite insignificant, in proportion to the advantages which the state would gain.

I come back to the opinion which forms the groundwork of this paper, that medical advisers of the state cannot be taken with advantage at haphazard from the mass of general practitioners, pure surgeons and pure physicians, who are devoting themselves to the business of curing individual patients. I believe that absorption in ordinary practice is a fatal bar to the acquisition of that kind of knowledge and that skill in communicating it which is indispensable. And I would urge with especial force the propriety of placing the man of science, from whom the state requires information, in a position of independence. The few remaining words which I have to say will be devoted to the consideration of an evil, already touched upon, which offers the most pointed example of the mischiefs arising from a neglect of this precaution.

The practice of receiving scientific evidence of an *ex parte* character is a disgrace to our judicial processes. When, on a criminal trial for instance, the question of the prisoner's mental soundness becomes of importance, it is a gross scandal that the jury should be left to form their momentous decision from a haphazard balancing of two extreme statements of the scientific facts propounded by two witnesses (or sets of witnesses) whose pecuniary and professional interests are bound up respectively with the prosecution and with the defence. It is quite possible that the best



expression of the fullest science on particular questions would necessarily be less clear and decided than could be wished. But that is no reason why we should deliberately accept such a version of the scientific facts of a case as must, from the method in which it has been extorted, be nearly worthless. The idea that any effective check upon the abuses of scientific authority thus occasioned can be effectively imposed by counsel in the cross-examinations is ludicrous. Here and there an exceptionally able lawyer, like Sir A. Cockburn, prompted in his questions by exceptionally able medical advisers, will succeed in dispelling a cloud of sophistries such as those by which the plain and straightforward medical facts of Palmer's case were attempted to be disguised; but it would be a great mistake to take this hard-won piece of success as any specimen of the average result to be expected from the application of cross-examination in the event of contradictions arising in medical evidence.

The remedy which, sooner or later, I am convinced will have to be applied, is the institution of scientific commissioners as adjuncts to the ordinary apparatus of the courts, before whom, and not before a common jury, the strictly scientific questions shall be argued—the general question in respect to the legal charge being subsequently determined as at present. Supposing some such scheme as that which has been above proposed for district officers of health to have been carried out, these officers might be employed as commissioners in the following way:—The officer for the particular district would *ex officio* collect all the scientific evidence by personal observation and interrogation on the spot, with the assistance of any ordinary medical attendant professionally cognisant of the facts. The whole mass of scientific facts would then be placed before the commission, which should consist of a certain limited number of experts selected in rotation from the district officers of health of the kingdom; and this body, with the assistance of the counsel for prosecution and defence,

should sift the facts and hear any other evidence which might be offered on the scientific questions. The commission would then come to as definite an opinion as was possible under the circumstances, and would embody this in a report to the court, which should be taken to be final as regards the scientific questions.

It would be difficult to believe that a scientific commission, chosen with these elaborate safeguards for its impartiality, would be more likely to be crotchety than a common jury of small shopkeepers. On the contrary, it would be an impossibility that half a dozen men, each of the scientific rank which is here presupposed, and entirely independent of the others as regards authority, should allow such perverse and baseless theories as those which frequently astonish and impress a jury of half-educated laymen to have any weight with them at all. Nor would such a body be afraid to confess the true state of the case should it happen, in a particular instance, that science could give *no definite answer* to the inquiries addressed to it by the state.

Defend it as you will, the present system of allowing a knot of confused, bewildered, and often half-terrified laymen to give the final decision on matters of science, which in fact they now do, is simply monstrous. It has been attempted to excuse the existing state of things by the argument that it is not *abstract truth*, but the highest probability, that the jury are instructed to discover, and that consequently they need not trouble about the actual right or wrong of scientific opinion, but must simply judge what is the *prevailing voice* of the science of the day on the question in hand. But that is precisely what they cannot discover, save by a lucky accident, under the present system. The prevailing voice of science is *not* represented by any balance struck, by unscientific persons, between the extreme views held by the learned on either side: such haphazard guesswork often results in an opinion which has really no relation to the points in dispute. Nothing but the

calm interchange of ideas between scientific men themselves can afford a chance of the elicitation of the truth on some of the more difficult questions involved in forensic inquiries—I mean the truth, not in the abstract, but so far as science already knows it.

Before concluding, I must answer one objection which is certain to be raised—namely, that no man could grasp effectively the great range of science involved in the multifarious duties indicated. This objection might readily be met by separating from the general duties of the office, which would be homogeneous in character, certain specialties which are at once very difficult and of a different nature from the ordinary duties. Chemistry is a good instance of this. It would be not only possible, but highly desirable, that elaborate chemical inquiries, such as those concerned in cases of suspected poisoning, should be taken out of the hands of toxicologists, and always decided, apart from any theoretical considerations in physiology, by officials like those, let us say, of the College of Chemistry. On the other hand, such comparatively

simple duties as those of food inspection and analysis might easily be performed by an official so qualified as we have supposed our district health-officers to be. This great relief being given, the remaining subjects which would occupy the attention of our district officer would be confined to a circle of science certainly not larger, one would say greatly less, than that which the ordinary practitioner of medicine is supposed to grasp. And we should be delivered from the uncomfortable spectacle, now so frequently thrust upon us, of worthy men, perfectly well qualified for the latter branch of work, assuming at a moment's notice the functions of advisers of the state on the highly special and peculiar subjects which have been enumerated in this paper.

I am well aware that the ideas now put forward are difficult of realization. I am content, however, to wait the course of events. These ideas, which two years ago had not attracted much attention, have since that period received the notice of influential persons, and are already making distinct and perceptible progress.

## LIFE—A SONNET.

BY THE LATE ALEXANDER GILCHRIST.

ON eager feet, his heritage to seize,  
A traveller speeds toward the promised land.  
Afar gloom purple slopes on either hand;  
Glad earth is fragrant with the flowering leas;  
The green corn stirs in noon's hot slumberous breeze,  
And whispering woodlands nigh make answer grand.  
That pilgrim's heart as by a magic wand  
Is swayed: nor, as he gains each height, and sees  
A gleaming landscape still and still afar,  
Doth Hope abate, nor less a glowing breath  
Wake subtle tones from viewless strings within.  
But lo! upon his path new aspects win;  
Dun sky above, brown wastes around him are;  
From yon horizon dim stalks spectral Death!

GUILDFORD, June, 1856.

## ESSAYS AT ODD TIMES.

## I. "OF MAGNANIMITY."

I WAS lately travelling in a railway carriage, in which there happened to be a party of city men, who were going into the country to shoot. Wealthy, portly, middle-aged men of business—they were evidently good specimens of a class which is every day becoming larger among us, the class of men who make their money in town, and like to spend it in the country, upon Norfolk stubbles and Scotch moors, and upon all the paraphernalia of dogs, guns, keepers, and beaters which such tastes necessitate. They had come out for a week's pleasure, and a very happy and jovial party they were. Happy, with the exception of one of their number, who had left in his cab a fine turbot, which was to have made its appearance at the dinner-table after the morrow's battue; and this poor gentleman, out for his brief holiday, was miserable on account of the loss of his fish. His enjoyment, for that day at any rate, was quite marred. The memory of the turbot, like Banquo's ghost, rose up to destroy every present pleasure. We talked of the cotton famine, and, after agreeing with us that the crisis of difficulty was over, he turned to one of his friends and remarked, "It's a thousand pities I forgot that fish, Jones, isn't it? I gave three shillings a pound for it—I did, upon my word—at Grove's, just before I started." We sat in silence, and smoked our cigars in bold defiance of bye-laws and regulations, for every compartment of the carriage was occupied, and every occupant had lit up, when the silence was broken by a plaintive voice exclaiming *à propos* to nothing, "I say, Smith, it is a confounded bore about that turbot, isn't it?" And so on, and so on, till at last the conversation turned upon a topic in which even Miserrimus—for so we will call him—was interested; the topic of

field sports. And here the men of Mincing Lane and the Stock Exchange were in their element. They all hunted, they all fished, they all shot, and they could all talk of sport and the money it cost them. Smith had with him a favourite setter, for which he had lately given a hundred and twenty guineas; Jones was going to try a new breech-loader, for which he had paid the fancy price of fifty pounds. "You know," he remarked, "you can get a gun to do anything a gun should do for half the money; but then," he continued naively, "I like to have everything of the best, tip-top—keepers, dogs, horses; or else the swells are sure to laugh at you." A sentiment which even Miserrimus endorsed, with the remark that he did not mind giving a fancy price for the best of everything,—not even if it was three shillings a pound for such a fish as that—that turbot which he had left in the confounded cab.

Listening to the harmless tattle of these city gentlemen, I lit another cigar, and gave myself up to the various phases of littlemindedness which crop out so plentifully upon the surface of modern society. I asked myself, Do long seasons of national and individual prosperity tend to foster this littlemindedness? Was the Laureate right in welcoming a European war as a moral flood to rebaptize the nations? And so I fell upon considering the virtue of Magnanimity,—whether we know even the shadow thereof in these our days; whether amongst all our friends and acquaintances we know—any one of us—of one who might stand for the truly magnanimous man. The word, indeed, has somewhat narrowed its horizon in the course of time. We all know that it means greatmindedness. But, as a general rule, we limit it to that single phase of greatmindedness which is shown in the forgiveness of a wrong. And yet this

is but one of many ways in which greatness of soul can manifest itself; and perhaps it is not even the highest manifestation of the virtue. For I am not sure but that some men, in whom ambition and vanity are strong, may not find it easier to forgive the injuries of a foe than to pardon the successes of a friend. Dean Trench has shown us how words have dropped out of the world's vocabulary, as being no longer needed, or have altogether lost their primary meaning. And it will be worth while to inquire whether the virtue which was magnanimity in heathen days has found no place for itself under the Christian dispensation, and so has narrowed itself down to the Christian virtue of forgiveness, or whether it has undergone a rebaptism, and is known in the modern world under some other name. At any rate, it is evident that even in Christian England, in the nineteenth century, there is room for a word which shall express the contrary to that fidgety, prying, invidious, mean and despicable condition of mind which men fall into who deal with things rather than with persons, who are chiefly conversant with the petty concerns of life, with money-getting, with buying and selling, and so forth, and so insensibly lapse into a low and stunted condition of soul.

"The magnanimous man," said Aristotle, "is he who, being really worthy, estimates his own worth highly. If a man puts too high a value upon himself, he is vain. And if a man, being worthy, does not rate himself at his proper worth, why he is little better than a fool. But the magnanimous man will be only moderately gratified by the honours which the world heaps upon him, under the impression that he has simply got what is his due. He will behave with moderation under both bad fortune and good. He will know how to be exalted and how to be abased. He will neither be delighted with success, nor grieved by failure. He will neither shun danger, nor seek it; for there are few things which he cares for. He is reticent and somewhat slow of speech, but speaks his

mind openly and boldly when occasion calls for it. He is not apt to admire, for nothing is great to him. He overlooks injuries. He is not given to talk about himself or about others; for he does not care that he himself should be praised, or that other people should be blamed. He does not cry out about trifles, and craves help from none. The step of the magnanimous man is slow, his voice deep, and his language stately: for he who cares about few things has no need to hurry, and he who thinks highly of nothing needs not to be vehement about anything." Such is the character of the magnanimous man, as drawn by an old heathen writer more than 2,000 years ago. Doubtless this was a standard of perfection at which Aristotle himself aimed, and which many a Greek attained to,—in outward seeming at least; though the Athenian magnanimity must have sadly degenerated when Paul of Tarsus preached on Mars Hill to a crowd of gossips and triflers four hundred years later. And certainly the portrait as drawn by Aristotle has something grand, we may almost say noble, in its lineaments. Indeed, it would be noble but for the lazy scorn which flashes from the eye and curls the lip. Self-contained and self-reliant, the magnanimous man towers above his fellows, like an oak amongst reeds,—his motto *nec franges nec flectes*. And, if there be somewhat too much of self-sufficiency about him, we must remember that, to be great and strong, a heathen must necessarily lean upon himself. The settler in foreign and sparsely inhabited countries needs and acquires a degree of self-reliance and self-assertion which would be offensive in the person of a member of civilised society. And the Greek became self-sufficient even in his ethics, as having no definite promise of help out of himself, or beyond his own resources.

But it is curious to notice how in the main the ethics of 2,000 years ago repeat themselves in the fashionable ethics of to-day. Much of what Aristotle has said of the magnanimous man as to his carriage and bearing, might

have been published only last year as a fashionable treatise by the Hon. Mr. A—— or Lady B—— on good breeding and the manners of a gentleman. Alter a word or two here and there; blot out the rather offensive self-sufficiency; lay a very thin wash of colour over the superciliousness of manner which is somewhat too manifest in Aristotle's magnanimous man, and you might be reading a description of "the swell," as poor Jones calls the man who lives and moves and has his being in society. There is no doubt, in fact, that the laws of good breeding, the *leges inscriptæ* of society, do tend, more or less, to produce an appearance of what the old Greeks named magnanimity. These laws are simply the barriers which the common sense of most has erected, to protect people who are thrown much together from each other's impertinences. They are lines of defence, and therefore their tendency is to isolate the individual from the crowd; to make him self-contained, reticent, and independent of opinions; alike careless of censure and indifferent to applause. It may be said that much of this is only manner. But, as in poetry the matter often grows out of the manner, so the character is often insensibly influenced by the outward bearing; a man becomes to some extent what he wishes to appear.

For the question must needs present itself,—Is this a mere matter of fashion and good breeding. The calm and stately bearing, the polished, urbane address, the unruffled surface of a stream which seems to have no slimy depths,—are these things the mere accidents of a position, the mere outward husk and shell of a man; or are they the indices of certain qualities inherent in a certain class, and in which other classes are not equally privileged to share? Aristotle associates magnanimity with good fortune. He declares boldly that wealth and power tend to make men magnanimous. And a philosopher of a later age, the clever and witty Becky Sharpe, if we mistake not, held a similar opinion. "Ah! how good and great-minded I could be," she remarks, "if I had five

thousand a year." And really there is something more in her assertion than appears upon the surface. She saw that she was living a life of petty shifts and little meannesses, cajoling one friend, flattering another, and cringing to a third; and all for the sake of a maintenance, for a few paltry pounds more or less. Give her the money, and what need would there be any longer for flattery, or meanness? Another modern philosopher, however, is of quite a different opinion from our friend Becky. Mr. Ruskin, in one of his amusing pamphlets,—which, under the name of *Art*, treats of all things and a few things besides, whether in heaven or earth, or in the waters under the earth,—Mr. Ruskin suggests that some benevolent gentleman shall set up shop, in order to show the world that honesty, and gravity, and truth, and piety, may be found behind a counter as well as anywhere else. But has Mr. Ruskin forgotten the old adage about contact with pitch? I will state his case and illustrate his idea. His model tradesman, let us suppose, a gentleman by birth and education, dons the apron and commences trade in—we will say the small grocery line of business in a little country town. Of course he finds that there is an opposition shop.—there always is an opposition shop in little country towns—quite ready to compete with him, and to undersell him by any and every means, legitimate or otherwise. All goods must be sold at the lowest price compatible with any profit at all; and, if his rival has capital enough to carry on the game, at a lower price still. Then come the sanding of the sugar, the dusting of the pepper, the watering of the tobacco at the opposition shop; and what is our magnanimous man to do? Shall he preserve his integrity and vacate the field, or shall he throw his honesty to the dogs, and strangle his truth? It is clear that one or other of these things he must do. Do I then mean to assert that magnanimity is incompatible with trade, that greatness of soul is not to be found in the man whose daily business is weighing out sugar and selling figs? By no means.



But I am very much of Becky Sharpe's opinion, that it is much easier to be magnanimous on five thousand a year than on fifty pounds a year. Of course there are exceptional men who will show their greatness by bending their minds to mean but necessary occupations, and raising these occupations by the spirit in which they are followed. But such men as these are the salt of the earth. And I take it that such men as these are very rare. In truth, even with the highest class of minds, the accidents of their position, the men with whom they are thrown, the callings they pursue, do contribute more or less to foster or to destroy the virtue we are considering. It is hard to live with narrow-minded people and yet not to contract some stain of narrow-mindedness. It is above all a difficult thing to be engaged in the business of money-getting and still to value money at its proper worth; for the subject of our daily labours and anxieties must necessarily be apt to obtain an undue and preponderating prominence in our thoughts.

But, if poverty be inimical to magnanimity, as tending to make men exalt the temporal at the expense of the eternal, wealth and prosperity have no less their dangers. The struggling man of business, who has safely carried honour and magnanimity out of the fray, may find his Capua in respectability and a handsome income in the funds. He may become littleminded and a trifler, a hanger-on upon great people, a taster of entrées, and a connoisseur of wines, and be a little too apt to complain of the crumpled rose-leaf in his couch. And what then can restore him to himself but the sharp pinch of a great trial? If he has any regard for the virtue he has lost, I recommend him at once to draw his money out of the funds, and to invest it in the private bank of an intimate friend, if possible of a near relation, with interest at the rate of six, or even seven, per cent. paid quarterly. And then, if there does not speedily come such a crash as shall astonish him, and send him back to his mutton chop and pint of pale ale with a magnanimous in-

dependence of mind and a sovereign contempt for the world's opinion, I can only say that he will have tried my remedy in vain. For it is strange to see how even the meanest minds often rise into magnanimity under the pressure of a great and sudden trial. We will take the first instance that offers itself for an example: that poor private in the Buffs who was killed by the Chinese a year or two back for refusing to kotow at the name of their emperor. Here was an ignorant country lad, a mere clod of Suffolk or Dorsetshire clay, far from friends and home, and fresh from the unheroic discipline of pipeclay and goose-step, yet giving his life like a hero for his honour and his duty. Yesterday, a clown, his highest pleasure the grog-shop—to-day, Leonidas does not surpass him in magnanimity!

On the whole I think it will be found that a strong religious conviction is the best, perhaps the only, specific for delivering men from the petty interests, the little cares, the envies, the heart-burnings, the meannesses, which pertain to an overcrowded state of society. I believe that few religious enthusiasts will be found to have been littleminded in worldly matters. They may have been bigoted, fierce, cruel; they may have had a narrowmindedness peculiarly their own: but we must acknowledge that the zealots of religion have, on the whole, been magnanimous in dealing with the things that are Cæsar's. Indeed, the interests with which religion is concerned are so vast that all merely temporal interests are dwarfed into insignificance by the side of them. And, of all human exemplars of magnanimity, I know of none who can for a moment compare with that poor prisoner, who from his dungeon at Rome declared with unfaltering voice that he had learnt through much suffering, in whatever state of life he was, therewith to be content; that he knew how to be full and to be hungry, how to abound and to suffer want; and that he was willing, if it pleased God, to live, and yet was not afraid, yea, was even ready, if so it pleased Him, to die.

## II. "OF ESSAY WRITING."

It is not to be wondered at that Essays are popular. We all like gossip. The human bow cannot always be bent, or its string would soon crack. The most thinking and aspiring philosopher cannot be always in the cloudland of high thoughts and aspirations, but must come down sometimes to the dead level of common everyday humanity, and find himself swayed more or less by the currents of hopes and fears, of anxieties and passions, by which his fellow-men are swayed. When Johnson the logician, and Thompson the great art-critic meet each other on the shady side of Pall Mall, do you think they fall to immediately at a word-battle of dialectics, or are engrossed by a critical discussion of Millais's last new picture? Not a bit of it. The probability is that the topic which interests them, and on which they have so much to say to each other, is closely connected with Johnson's dinner-hour, or Thompson's mother-in-law. In fact we all like that common chat which grows out of our common life. And it is for this reason that Essay-writing, which is only a better sort of gossip, has been always a popular form of literature; bringing, as it does, literature home to men's businesses and bosoms.

And, considering what classes of society contribute the great mass of readers at the present day, the only wonder is that the writing of Essays does not form a more manifest current in that great flood of book-making which is sweeping the modern mind on to chaos and forgetfulness. I suppose that the greater number of readers—of people to whom books are a necessity—is to be found in country-houses, amongst those who are tolerably well educated, and yet are isolated and shut off from communion with many cultivated minds. To such people books are society, books are friends. It was not in London, but at Foston-in-the-Clay, in the wilds of Yorkshire, that Sydney Smith exclaimed so devoutly, "Thank God for books!"

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And one would suppose that Essays afford the pabulum on which the minds of country readers will love to feed. Take the country parson for instance,—and the country parson interest is 20,000 strong; will he not find just the sort of reading he wants in Essays (I do not mean "Essays and Reviews"), when he comes home to his fireside after going the rounds of his parish? Whilst he has been about his work—I am supposing him to be a conscientious man,—his mind has been on the stretch in the endeavour to infuse into other minds, duller and less intelligent than his own, certain great truths, which have to be adapted to the individual capacity of each person with whom he has been talking. He has been striving to rouse dead consciences, and to awaken love in cold hearts. He has been occupied in that most difficult work, applying special remedies to special diseases. Wearied and jaded with his labour, with a heart pierced and stained by contact with many forms of sin, as his feet are mud-stained with the mire of the lanes through which they have passed, he comes home, to seek refreshment for mind and body. Now, what book shall he take up, when dinner is over, and the reading-lamp throws its cheerful light over drawn curtains and crowded shelves? Fiction would seem too trivial; history, perhaps, too solid. The very thing for him would be a desultory chat, grave or gay, with some intellectual and talkative friend. And such a friend does he find in the Essayist.

For the Essay furnishes one of the few instances in which easy writing is at the same time easy reading. In the first place it is in some measure fragmentary, and can be taken up and put down at odd times. Then it does not profess much. It does not set out with drawing a heavy bill on our attention, and so we are all the more ready to honour its demands. It does not address us, so to speak, *ex cathedra*. It assumes no judicial or magisterial functions; it rather comes to us as a cheerful, talkative friend who stops us in the street going to or coming from business, and

gives us five minutes of pleasant chat before passing on his way. And, if an educated man of common average ability throws open his mind and tells us frankly his thoughts, this very frankness conciliates and disarms the criticism of the private reader; all the more, perhaps, because such unguardedness lays the writer open to the stings of professional criticism, and is therefore becoming rarer and rarer every day. We only ask that the writer shall be natural and unaffected in saying what he has to say: not a great demand truly—and yet not an everyday virtue this. Moreover, the Essay is almost the only form of literature in which we can pardon egotism. In truth egotism is here a virtue—provided, of course, that it is the egotism of a cultivated and thoughtful mind; what would be impertinent in other writers is not felt to be so in the Essayist; what would be trifling and mean in the Historian is not held to be trifling and mean in him. For, if he would interest us, he must consider nothing too trivial to press into his service for illustration of his subject; he must give us all those little touches of manners, and feelings, and fancies, and facts which serve to give point and interest to the daily household chat of clever people. "For my part," says old Montaigne, *à propos des bottles*, "I am a great lover of your white wines." Upon which the younger Scaliger comments: "What the deuce does it matter to us whether he was a lover of white wines or red?" Why it matters thus much, that but for these little autobiographical touches revealing the *man* under the writer, Montaigne's Essays would have been what Scaliger's writings are, well-nigh unread: dust-gathering, fly-entombing tomes upon scholastic bookshelves.

But it may be expected that in treating of Essay-writing some definition of the word Essay should be given, that its boundary and pomerium should, at any rate, be fixed. Now this is a difficult thing to do. Any kind of definition is hard and unsatisfactory, and apt to obscure what before perhaps was plain

enough. Every one will remember as a case in point how the great lexicographer, who made sprats talk like whales, tried to explain the word "network" by calling it a reticulation. I would say then, that reviews of books, such as we meet with in the *Quarterly* and *Edinburgh*, are not Essays; nor are biographies, however condensed; nor are treatises, however unmethodical. The great charm of the Essay is that of a country footpath, which winds irregularly, and yet gets over the ground somehow; here skirting a coppice, there passing by a mill and its stream; now dipping into a hollow, and now climbing a hill; giving us the while many a picturesque bit of country life and scenery which an artist would like to frame and glaze, and hang upon his walls as a possession for ever. One might almost define the Essay, then, as a wit defined the science of metaphysics, as "*l'art de s'égayer avec méthode*." But then one must not altogether lose one's way. There must be a clue held in hand throughout. However the greyhounds of thought may twist and double, they must catch their hare at last. But one especial virtue the Essay should, at any rate, have—it must be short. I look upon the average run of Essays of the present day as altogether too long. The Essay proper ought not to exceed those which we meet with in the *Spectator*, or in any of the fifty or sixty volumes which crowd old bookshelves under the title of "British Essayists." And, lastly, the Essay has no business to be political. My friend, we have newspapers enough; we have enough demand upon our thoughts for the day that is passing, with its wars and rumours of war, its successes or failures, its conflicts political, literary, religious. In these too we must take our part as becomes us,—often perhaps upon opposite sides, working in the valleys of labour under the hot sun all day. But in the evening let us come forth and mount the hill together, having washed from our souls the taints and bitternesses of the fray, that we may meet the fresh breeze of heaven, and see the sunset still lingering in the sky.

# DEAD MEN WHOM I HAVE KNOWN; OR, RECOLLECTIONS OF THREE CITIES.

BY THE EDITOR.

## AN EDINBURGH BROTHERHOOD—AGOSTINO RUFFINI.

My first acquaintanceships in Edinburgh, formed chiefly in and about the University, led to others and others of a more general kind, until, continuing to reside in that city after my direct connexion with the University had ceased, I settled into the more familiar society of a pretty definite group of very dear friends. For, though Edinburgh is of such a size that everybody in it may after a fashion know everybody else, yet even there affinities are at work, overruling opportunities, and bringing some into closer relations with each other than any which they can hold with the general body. And so, while there was not one member of the fraternity of which I speak that had not a range of acquaintances of his own in the general society of the place, this did not prevent, among the members collectively, a certain feeling as if they belonged peculiarly to each other. There was no external recognition of the fraternity, no approach to a club-organization. We simply liked to be together when we could, and, by various ways and means, were a good deal together. Now it would be the late evening chat and smoke of one or two of us—a kind of cabinet council for the rest—in the rooms of one in particular; now it would be a short afternoon stroll of one or two, or three or four, of us; at intervals it would be a dinner or supper, volunteered by one who had household facilities for such hospitality; and the largest development which the thing took was, once or twice in the year, a hotel-dinner at Granton, a fish-dinner at Newhaven, or a joint excursion for a day to the Pentlands, ending not unconquially in some inn near Hunters' Tryst. Once, at one of these larger

gatherings, we did propose to call ourselves a club; but, though we even thought of a name, the proposal came to nothing, as too precise and mechanical for our limited number and our subtle requirements. In vain, then, will the annals of modern Athens be searched for any documentary trace of what was, nevertheless, for some years prior to 1848, a very real, and not unimportant, fellowship of souls within its bounds. There still remain there, indeed, one or two who were of us, and who perchance, looking round among the new associates that time and change have given them, may sometimes revert in memory to the older ones that are gone, and even assert of them, "*fuere fortes*," when they speak of them to their successors—

"They do not listen to my present singing,  
The souls to whom I sang my maiden song;  
Dispersed the friendly few once round me  
clinging;  
Silent, alas! the echoes heard so long;  
My sorrows to the ears of strangers bringing,  
I feel their very praise a kind of wrong,  
Since those who once delighted in my ditties  
Are dead, or scattered through the wide world's  
cities."

What was thus felt in Weimar, by the poet who saw himself surviving so many of his former friends, the same, with the due alteration in the mode of expressing it, must one or two men in the city of which I am now thinking feel on looking round them, and comparing the present with the past. Though their "singing" may be of no public kind at all, but only the private utterance in unrestrained hours of whatever comes into their minds, for them also, whatever may be the compensation of new intimacies, there must be moments when they have a regretful pleasure in

surrounding themselves again in fancy with the faces of the earlier group. "Dead or scattered"—how true of that particular fraternity of which I speak ! Methinks I hear one of its Edinburgh survivors reckoning up, for the information of the new-comers about him, the losses in both lists. So-and-so, and so-and-so, and yet such another, he would reckon among the scattered—telling of them as still in the land of the living, but almost lost sight of by dispersion. Then, in the more sacred category of the dead, are there not at least two whom he would mention in chief ? Certainly, if the tradition of that one of the two whom I am to speak of in this paper has faded from the memory of Edinburgh, and is not there still fresh and bright, intellects are less discerning, and hearts are colder, than they used to be round Arthur Seat.

#### AGOSTINO RUFFINI.

He was, I may say, the centre of the group. Its constituting principle, I may say, was our common affection for Ruffini. Whatever we were individually, or in other relations, we might, as a fraternity, have been called the Ruffinians. Whoever in Edinburgh knew Ruffini with the due degree of intimacy was actually or potentially one of us. "Or potentially" I say, for it has happened that persons who never chanced to meet each other within the bounds of any of those little gatherings which I have called more especially those of the fraternity, have afterwards, on coming together, at once felt themselves old friends, on the simple ground of their having both been friends of Ruffini. All the more strange was this because Ruffini sought no such influence, and was quite unconscious of the magnetism that made him such a bond of union. In truth, when I think of it now, I suspect that our attractiveness towards him must have sometimes been a trouble to him, and that, on many an evening when we gave him our company or compelled him to be one of us, he would rather have been smoking his pipe by

himself, reading his Dante, or, with his dark eyes fixed on the coals, pursuing the track of his own ruminations.

And who was this Ruffini ? Writing now, I may make him at once less unknown to many by saying that he was a younger brother of the Giovanni Ruffini whose "*Lorenzo Benoni*," "*Doctor Antonio*," "*Lavinia*," and other stories, have within the last few years shown us how beautifully an Italian, though not residing among us, may write English, and have made it a pleasure to count him among our living English authors. Even before there was this means of introducing my friend, it might have been enough, so far as a few were concerned, to say that he was one of that family of the Ruffinis of Genoa whose sufferings in the old days of Piedmontese despotism are matter of historical record. In Louis Blanc's "*History of Ten Years*" may be read a reference in particular to the tragical death of one of the brothers, the young Jacopo Ruffini, after the discovery of the design of a general Italian insurrection organized in 1833 by the "*Young Italy*" party, and which was to have its beginning in Piedmont. But let me speak of Agostino Ruffini apart from such associations, and simply as he would have been recognised casually in Edinburgh in those days, before the apocalyptic '48, when insurrections and Italy were by no means such respectable things to the British imagination as they have become since. Well, to the casual view of Edinburgh in those days, he was a teacher of Italian. It was but a small effort of reasoning, however, to conclude, on seeing him, that such a man as he had not become a teacher of Italian in Edinburgh on the mere principle of voluntary tendency to the position of perfect felicity. To any one, therefore, who cared to inquire, it was not difficult to ascertain that he was a Genoese who had been driven into exile at an early age in consequence of some political turmoil in 1833 (no one pretended then to exact information about such events), and who, after leading the life of a refugee in Switzerland, Paris, and London, had come to Edinburgh in 1840 to



settle there at the age of about thirty. He had brought some introductions with him, and with such effect that, after living for a while in lodgings, he had pupils enough for his purpose, and found it convenient to become tenant of the upper part of a house in George Street, paying rent and taxes like an ordinary citizen. This house in George Street was his domicile during the whole time of his stay in Edinburgh after my acquaintance with him began. It was there that we used to drop in upon him in the evenings; it was thence that we lured him to join us elsewhere on any occasion we could devise; it was in virtue of the tendency of the footsteps and the thoughts of so many different persons thither that there was formed in Edinburgh what I have called the Ruffinian fraternity. Whenever I am in Edinburgh now, it is with a strange feeling of melancholy that I pass the house, and look up at what were Ruffini's windows.

Ruffini was a man of middle height, of spare figure, slightly bent forward at the shoulders by sedentary habits, of the normal dark Italian complexion, and with features also Italian but far from regular or handsome,—the nose in particular blunted somewhat Socratically, but the brow full, and the eyes of a deep soft black. The general expression was grave, reserved, and gentle, with a possibility of sternness. Our northern climate and east winds told cruelly at times on his health and spirits; he was seldom long free from rheumatism or neuralgia, and was abnormally sensitive to malevolent approaching changes of weather. In all his personal habits he was scrupulously fastidious, conforming in every possible respect to English custom. Whether in his old dressing-gown, seated in the arm-chair in the plain attic room to which he confined his smoking, or as he walked out with his cane, or as he was to be seen in a drawing-room with other guests, his bearing was that of a quiet and perfectly-bred gentleman, who might have been mistaken for an Englishman, but for his Italian face and accent, and a certain ease of courtesy which was also Italian. So unwilling was he to take

the benefit of any allowance for his being a foreigner, in favour of any points of demeanour differing from the standard of those among whom he was living, that he had tried to cure himself of the habit of gesticulation when he spoke. He had done this in a very characteristic way, by writing on the margins of the books he most frequently took up the words, "Ruffini, don't gesticulate." He had succeeded in a great measure, but not quite. He retained some little movements with his shoulders and a peculiar emphatic lifting of his forefinger to his cheek, which gave great point to what he said, and which we would not willingly have parted with. Another spiteful thing he was driven to do to himself on the same principle. He wrote a most beautiful hand,—one of those very small, upright, print-like hands, with picturesquely-formed square letters, which seem to have been taught in the schools in some parts of Italy. He had heard so much said of this hand, had been praised for it so much, and questioned about it so much, that at length the thing became a horror to him, and he deliberately changed it for the worse,—keeping the same square character in the writing, but making it more open and clumsy, so as effectually to stop farther flattery on that score. In such-like little traits of self-castigation and self-adjustment a higher reason, I believe, was involved than he avowed, or than such detached telling of them would suggest. It was not, most certainly it was not, that he wanted to doff or disguise the Italian. On the contrary, it was because of the very strength of his Italian self-respect. It was because of a regard for his country so deep and proud that it recoiled from the notion that his nationality should be identified with accidents, mannerisms, and trifles, and would take steps to rest the Italian claim only on its essentials.

He was, indeed, an Italian to the very soul. In the fact of his being an Italian, and so high and just a specimen of the race, lay the first and most general source of his impressiveness among us. He was sent among us by Providence,

I may say, to interest us in Italy, and to show us, in anticipation of the time when the knowledge might be of use to us, what manner of man a real Italian might be. Those were not the days of travel ; and to most of us Italy was but a blurred continuation of the Italy of our classical readings. We thought of it as the long boot-like peninsula, still stretching into the Mediterranean and kicking Sicily as of yore—with the Alps still shutting it off on the north, and the Apennines still running as a seam down its middle ; with vines, and olives, and what not, still growing on it, and a soft blue sky still overhanging it ; nay, as we could not but also know, with a great quantity of rich mediæval and modern history engraven upon it over the traces of its earlier imperial history, and making it, almost alone of lands, a veritable and splendid palimpsest. But of the second writing we knew less than of the first—little more, indeed, than that it contained records of a Florence, and other cities and states, that had been wondrously prolific in men of genius, and, strangely interwrought with these, the central story of the Papacy. Of the existing political system of Italy we could have given but a meagre account. That it was morselled out into different states and governments—that it had been so morselled out for ages, and that not even the remodelling of Europe by Napoleon, himself an Italian, had united the fragments—as much as this, perhaps, some of us knew. But, had we been called upon, without warning, to enumerate the Italian states, we should have passed a pitiful examination. Not that this ignorance precluded our knowing that, whatever the subdivisions, they were all under despotisms, native or Austrian—Austria really having the whole in her grasp. We had heard of insurrections in Italy ; we regarded insurrections and conspiracies as phenomena belonging no less to Italy than to Poland ; and, on the whole, if only through our Protestant prepossessions, and our proper British liking for patriotism and love of liberty anywhere, it would have been with the

Italians and not with the Austrians, with the insurgents and not with the established governments, that we should have been prepared to sympathize in the case of any important new outbreak. But, after all, Italy was a great way off—its woes hardly within acting-distance of our minds. We had other things to think of. What was Italy to us, or what were we to Italy ?

Well, it was as an uncommissioned and almost unconscious representative of this distant and dimly-conceived Italy that Ruffini appeared among us. An exile, since his youth, from his native Genoa, he had been led by a series of accidents into our North-British latitudes, and had settled in Edinburgh—not the first of his countrymen, by any means, that had done so, but the first, perhaps, in circumstances likely to make him the object of some amount of thoughtful attention. Considering how and where he was met with, we began acquaintance with him with inquisitiveness more awake than it usually is on first encounters with a new person. Something was at stake in this, as far as Italy's future place in our thoughts was concerned. Where such greater preliminary curiosity than usual is excited, the result is apt to be a break-down. People are often so undiscerning, so merely good-natured and so little critical and exact in their expressions in a stranger's favour, that actual observation of the stranger, for even a little while, produces reaction and disappointment. In particular, the experience of political refugees as a class has been, in many quarters, disillusionizing. It might, accordingly, very easily have happened that the Italian stranger in Edinburgh was but an average refugee—in which case that would not have followed which did so remarkably follow in Ruffini's case. But we were exceptionally fortunate in *our* Italian. No average refugee was he, but one of Italy's best, finest, and gentlest—a man to be known on and on, ever more subtly and intimately, and yet never to be exhausted or known enough ; to be found wise, true, honourable and good by even the most delicate

tests that could be applied. Little wonder that Italy benefited at our hands from this happy chance that had sent him among us as her representative. We transferred our feeling for him to his country. We took a new interest in Italian matters for his sake. We estimated the worth that there might still be in Italy by reference to him as a specimen of the kind of men she could produce; and our very measure of the inherent detestability of the existing political system in Italy was that it had ejected such a man and could not retain him as a citizen.

All this, however, was brought about quietly and without intention on his part. He appeared nowhere in Edinburgh in the character of a political refugee, nor did he ventilate any set of political opinions. He had ceased, I believe, to take any concern, even by correspondence, in the maintenance, in any practical form, of his country's question. He had accepted his own lot mournfully but philosophically; and his stay in Britain, and acquaintance with our manners and institutions, had imparted a shade of what might be called conservatism to the sum-total of his views on political subjects. To his neighbour-citizens he was simply a teacher of Italian; in society he was simply a cultivated, agreeable, but rather reserved Italian gentleman. It was among his private friends only—and, even among them, not in any formal way, but casually and from time to time—that he was led to talk freely and specifically of Italian matters, and of himself in connexion with them. Little by little, from an anecdote here, a sigh of suppressed reminiscence there, and sometimes a flash of fervid opinion elicited from him unexpectedly, we were able to piece together the story of his life, and to understand how he still felt in the matter of his country's state and prospects, while at the same time our knowledge of Italy became wonderfully more living and definite in consequence of these colloquies. We came to a more distinct cognisance of the general condition of the peninsula, and of the relative degrees of liberty to

think, speak, and live, accorded by its different governments—Tuscany then being the easiest and most kindly-natured, and Piedmont (who would now believe it?) about the most sombre and repressive. While we had authentic details which enabled us to conceive, better than all abstract assertions in books, the malignant effects of the secular and priestly tyranny throughout Italy, and the irrepressible loathing with which it could not but be regarded by all Italians whom it had not stupefied, and especially by the Italian youth, it was the working of the system in Piedmont that was most especially brought home to us. We had glimpses of Genoa, of incidents in Ruffini's own boyhood and youth there, of the Ruffini household, while father, mother, and a goodly number of brothers were as yet all together, and it was the daily anxiety of the father that, if possible, he should see all the sons without exception gathered at the family supper-table. Of the crashing blow which fell on the family with the fatal "Young Italy" movement of 1833, and of the particular sequence which had involved himself along with his elder brothers, Ruffini never, or all but never, could be induced to speak. I remember, but without being able to date or to localize the incident, an anecdote which he told more for the sake of the oddity of the speech it contained than for any other reason. A bridge was to be taken somewhere. It was to be done by a band of insurgents, mostly young men, who knew little of the way in which to set about such a business, but who were led by an officer who had served under Napoleon. It was early in the morning, and they had had a glass or two of wine, but no breakfast, when their commander, after some preliminary explanations, thus addressed them: "As you are marching toward the bridge, they will fire at you. Never mind; you march on. They will fire again. You are not hit; you still march on. They will again fire, and you are wounded. Never mind; you march on. Again they will fire, and you are killed this time. Never

mind ; march on still." On from the date of this incident, whenever it was, we were able more or less distinctly to follow Ruffini through the different stages of his exile—first in Switzerland and in Paris with the elder brother who was his companion ; then, when Louis-Philippe's government had become temporarily ungracious to the Italian emigration, in London with the same brother ; and so, finally, here among ourselves in Edinburgh as we knew him. His brother, of whom he often spoke, and who was now the sole surviving one, was meanwhile back in Paris ; and the thoughts of both, we understood, reverted much to their widowed mother, still residing in Genoa, and able to communicate with her sons by indirect ways, but uncertain whether she should ever again behold them in life. We heard of some family-property near Genoa, as to the fate and management of which, and especially as to the annual report of the state of the olive-crop, there was good reason for anxiety. Owing to early associations, I suppose, these olive-grounds had retained a peculiarly strong hold of Ruffini's memory. Not only did the pale mist of olive-plantations always recur with peculiar fascination among his recollections of Italian scenery ; he would dilate to us with mock-gravity on the super-excellency of those olives of his affections over all other olives known or conceivable. Ah ! those were olives ; and the oil—O such beautiful oil ! If only it could be introduced into this country, what a blessed thing it would be ! It would be cheap—yes, he would undertake that it should be cheap, and yet the money he would make by it ! But it was not usually put into those oval Florence-flasks, and the oil-men here, he was afraid, were wedded to the oval Florence-flasks. Then, besides, supposing he got over a quantity, and it was in Florence-flasks, was he to go through the streets with a Florence-flask of oil in his pocket, and look up at all the signs, and, when he saw the shop of a man who sold oil, go in, and take out the flask from his pocket, and say

to the man, "Sir, will you be so good as to taste that ? I have plenty more, and I will sell you some cheap" ? On the whole, he was afraid the thing could not be done, and those olives would never have justice done them till Italy was free ! Reaching which phrase—"till Italy is free"—either through such banter, or through talk in a graver tone, he would, if questioned, be frank enough in expressing his thoughts on the theme so suggested.

In the main he had given up hope. A deep despondency, natural to his temperament, had settled upon him in all his solitary ruminations as to the future of his country. There was even a speculative doubt which, he confessed once or twice, haunted him on this question—a doubt whether there were not evidences of a historical kind that the Italian race had run its course of independent vitality to the end, and already used up all the elements of strength accessible within itself. One evidence of this kind which he specially cited was that which seemed to be furnished by the Italian tongue itself, which he loved so much and knew so well. Musical and beautiful as it was, was not the perfect and long-attained finish of its organization as compared with that of the Teutonic and the mixed tongues—its definite system of forms and terminations, its comparative leisureliness of vocalization, its comparative inability to absorb new words or make new linguistic combinations—a proof that the race who spoke it had passed its stages of growth and arrived at the sere and decadent ? The resources that there were in the various popular dialects of Italy for a replenishing and reinvigorating of the classical Tuscan, were, of course, not unknown to him, nor, for that matter, the wealth of miscellaneous elements in Italian society that might be brought into the ferment of a new life, if ever certain restricting bonds could be removed. Still, as the very existence of these bonds was part and parcel of the nation, and not to be separated, as he thought, from its own blame or fatality, these doubts would morbidly recur to

him, and became a kind of theoretical nutriment to his natural melancholy. Not that ever once his own duty, or that of all the Italians, was in the least doubtful to him, if God, man, or demon should send the opportunity. It was fine to see how, in the midst of his despondency, he would sometimes fire up in telling us any little story of recent Italian patriotism or valour. That his countrymen had fought, could fight, and would fight, was a fact which he had a pleasure in impressing upon us by instances, as if it was valuable to him for its own sake. Once, I remember, he spoke with particular satisfaction, purely on this ground, of the deeds of a certain Italian legion in South America led by a heroic refugee. Garibaldi was the name; but it faded from my recollection, till it was recovered in due time, and I found that my acquaintance with the name was of earlier date than that of most people about me. If Ruffini doubted, as I believe he did doubt, whether ever in his time the fighting-power of his countrymen would have a chance of trying itself on a sufficient scale for its own proper work, yet what should be done, if ever the chance did occur, was clear to him as the dome of heaven. "We must fight, fight, fight. If one whole generation of us should have to be swept away in the process, and Italy can then be free, it will be a good bargain; but take even that hope away, and it is still only by our deaths for what is hopeless, by the deaths of a great many of us, that we Italians can do the best that it is left for us to do." Such was Ruffini's formula, and very nearly in these words. As to the mode of an Italian war of independence—whether by popular insurrection, or by a military prince taking the lead and founding a dynasty—I do not think he cared much. He was singularly tolerant of all the varieties of speculative Italian patriotism, republican, monarchical, or theocratic. Perhaps the extreme distance of the result in his imagination had kept him from definite ideas, one way or another, as to the most probable means. One thing,

however, I noted; and it is even plainer to me now than it was or could have been then. Indeterminate as were Ruffini's views as to the mode and the desirable political shaping of an Italian revolution, should it ever be possible, the idea of the unity of Italy, I could see, and I can now see more distinctly, underlay in his mind the idea of her liberty and independence. The two ideas were not to be dissociated. Italy could not be thought of as free and independent except by being thought of as formed into one nation. It was not so much that this identity of the two notions was articulately expressed. In those days the alternatives of a federal organization for Italy or the formation of the whole peninsula into a single European state had not been so distinctly presented to the British mind as that we should discuss them. But in all his phraseology it might have been found that the notion of Italy's freedom involved her unity as a pre-supposition. Events have since then given this fact, hardly more than half observed at the time, a considerable significance for me. Is there any one who does not remember how, among ourselves, only a few years ago, and even after the Italian revolution was in progress, the idea of Italian unity was everywhere, even among our liberals, pronounced a dream, a phantasy, a chimera? Could we have access now to the files of some of our newspapers which at the present day are most edifying on this very subject of Italian unity, and assume it as a postulate of European politics, and attack those who are not sufficiently possessed with it as not masters of the situation, how we could confront those journals with previous leading articles from their own columns ridiculing Italian unity, dissuading all sensible people from countenancing it, and denouncing it as the nostrum of some dangerous fanatics? It is perhaps the most striking public exemplification that has occurred within my experience of the great truth that there is a Tuesday in every week as well as a Saturday. For, all the while that the idea of Italian unity was voted



to be foolishness, History had adopted it and was secretly driving facts into that one channel. Say what we will of Mazzini, it was he more than any man that had, in this respect at least, correctly interpreted from the first the universal Italian intuition. It seems to me now that I never met any Italian in whose dream of Italian liberty there was not included, though he might not know it himself, the assumption of Italy's political unity from end to end, with Rome for the proper capital.

Enough, however, of Ruffini as personifying to us Italy considered politically. Though necessarily this was an important and interesting aspect of him to us, for whom Italy till then had been distant and vague, it was by no means in this character only that we found him an acquisition to Edinburgh, the loss of which would leave a painful blank. He considered himself naturalized among us ; and, apart from politics altogether, he brought to us a little treasure of acquired information and experience, which was all the more precious to us that a good deal of it was exotic.

"What I love best in all the world  
Is a castle, precipice-encurled,  
In a gash of the wind-grieved Apennine."

So says an imaginary speaker in one of Browning's lyrics. Well, suppose an ingenuous North-Briton that has some such love, or an occasional moment of it, living in the metropolis of his own less classic land, and with no hope of ever seeing the object of his love with his bodily eyes. There is a castle close by in the town, to be sure, which, if not precipice-encurled, is mounted on a precipice ; and there are gashes in the town, wind-grieved enough at times, especially when the wind is from the east. Nevertheless, there is a vacuum in the heart. Oh for that inaccessible valley in the Apennines ! Well, as he cannot go to it, would it not be the next best thing if some one who knew the valley, some native of its neighbourhood, were to arrive by chance within his reach, and bring him authentic descriptions of it ? Something of this kind it was that

Ruffini did for us in respect to the culture and literature of Italy. In his upper room in George Street what talks we had, which queries about this and that on our part converted into the daintiest and kindest bits of instruction on his ! I omit our occasional touches in common upon Latin writers. Here we had not so much to receive that was positively new. But in the history of Italian literature, whenever we chose to consult him, he was our ready Tira-boschi. He irradiated for us many a matter respecting which our preconceptions were hazy, and our direct book-information deficient. He it was who first made the great planet, Dante, swim properly into the ken of some of us. Macchiavelli was a favourite of his, and I have taken it on trust from him to this day that in that deep Italian brain, diabolic as it made itself appear popularly, there was an intrinsic soul of good. From him I first heard of Vico, and received such an inkling of the nature of the *Scienza Nuova* of that Neapolitan thinker as made me unsatisfied till I knew more of it. Among later Italian writers I remember with what peculiar interest he spoke of Leopardi, and how he excited my curiosity by a sketch of the strangely-sad life of that poet, and by showing me a volume of his poems to which was prefixed a portrait taken from his corpse, representing the dead head lying on a pillow, with its weary, wasted look, and the eyes closed.

While we thus stood to Ruffini chiefly in the relation of listeners and recipients so far as Italian literature was concerned, and while, to a less extent, it was the same with respect to recent French literature (for his stay in Paris had made him familiar with much of the French literature of Louis-Philippe's reign of which only rumours had reached us, and he brought us interesting news, I remember, of Balzac, Alfred de Vigny, Saint-Simon and the Saint-Simonians, Pierre Leroux, and others), we had even more frequent enjoyment in meeting him on a footing of equality on common ground, and comparing conclusions and impressions with him on

topics of English literature, or of current intellectual interest. Few Italians had so thoroughly mastered our idiom, or were so much at home among our great writers or the more select publications of the passing season. Here also the zest of his conversation arose perhaps in part from his being an Italian—from his importing into our colloquies a mode of thought which, though it must in the main have belonged to him individually, was in part to be attributed to his Italian nature. He was not expansive, or particularly fluent, as a talker, but, on the contrary, terse and ready to be silent; and, unless you were *tête-à-tête* with him, it was not the impetuosity of anything he said that struck you, but a certain character of wise and simple sententiousness, with frequently a turn of very fine humour. In no man's conversation that I have known did the movement of mind which intimate talk with one or two others excites end more usually in one of those deep little pools, mysteriously still, at the bottom of which, as the cause of the depth and the stillness, there is some compact and often-cogitated maxim of experimental wisdom. And the habit of mind which appeared in this characteristic was evident also in the nature of his tastes and preferences when the conversation ran on the books which we knew in common. Through it he fastened on much that we should have neglected or passed by but for the certificate given to it by his liking and recommendation. Thus, while his admiration of Shakespeare was as free and transcendent as that of any Englishman, it would happen again and again that the phrases or the passages which he had brought away in his memory from his last solitary readings in Shakespeare, or which he had noted with a view to consult us as to some difficulty in the interpretation, were not such phrases and passages as were familiar to the public mouth, or likely ever to be so, but those in which he had detected some little profundity of philosophy, heretofore unnoticed, but the value of which could not be doubtful after his commentary. And,

as he thus sometimes probed for us into the less-known parts of Shakespeare, so sometimes, among the publications of the day, a book would come into his way, his peculiar regard for which would at once accredit it to us, and predispose us to read it with proper expectation. One such book was an English translation of Ulrici's German work on Shakespeare. It had little or no popular success at the time, was pronounced dull and heavy by such of our critics as noticed it, and is now forgotten, or hardly to be met with. But Ruffini found in it a book after his own heart—indubitably the deepest and truest exposition, as he thought, of Shakespeare's dramatic method, and also the best collection of brief commentaries on the several plays. Another publication in which, at the time of its appearance, Ruffini was unusually interested, was "Blanco White's Autobiography." It was with such books as these, selected by his peculiar taste out of the current of each year's publications, that he varied his readings in the few established favourites that were nearest at hand on his shelf. To this place of honour he promoted, during one whole winter, a volume of Kant, to be taken up every now and then for regular study until he should have thoroughly digested it. Not only while he was thus engaged, but at other times, he was ready enough to enter on those discussions of extreme metaphysical or religious perplexity to which the talk of intimate friends, if they are serious with each other at all, ought surely to lead. At such times, it need hardly be said, speculations would be exchanged, and expressions of conviction and of sentiment would fall from his lips, not of a nature to be divulged at random all round at mid-day from an Edinburgh house-top. It was in an upper room that we sat, well roofed in by ourselves for our fireside chat late into the winter's night; and, only on stepping to the window and drawing aside the blind, could we see the slopes of the city around and underneath, descending as a vast embankment or valley of darkness towards the north, with hundreds

of lights irregularly twinkling in the gloom.

At the heart, however, of all our multiform liking for Ruffini on such various grounds as have yet been mentioned, and not only at the heart of all, but inter-fused through all as a warmer and subtler element of affection, was our experience of his singular efficiency in the character of a friend and counsellor in matters of personal concern. It was strange to see how, in a Scottish city, so many persons, the circumstances of whose lives were different enough from anything native to Italy, were drawn to this Italian, this alien, and found in him, far more than in each other, a confidant to whom they could entrust what was of deepest and most private interest to them. What was it in him that fitted him so rarely for this delicate function? I am not sure but that here also part of his qualification lay in what might at first sight have appeared a *disqualification*—his Italianism. Are not natives of the southern lands, and particularly Italians, distinguished from ourselves by the greater amount of immediate feeling and of immediate intellectual invention which they expend upon the incidents of common life, upon the little problems which arise in one's daily relations with society, or with individuals of either sex? Is not this what we mean when we speak of their sensitiveness, of the poignancy with which they feel things, of their sudden flushes of passion and of resentment of slights or wrongs? With us, of the northern races, comparative *insouciance* is the habit, unless on those extreme occasions when the limits of endurance are reached, and one all-confusing rage fills the mind and breaks down its partitions. Even in sentimental matters we drift along in great leagues and breadths of reverie; we do not, in this region, entertain and manœuvre individual incidents as they occur with half the excitability, or with half the expertness, of the Italian. Hence, the most practical of nations as the English are in the kinds of affairs usually included in the term "business," there are other

veins of affairs—and those constituting for many frequently, and for all occasionally, more truly the essence of life than the "business" that embeds them—in which the practicality of the English is numb and clownish as compared with that of which the Italian is often a master. Applying this observation, whatever it may be worth, to our present purpose, one may say that, wherever among ourselves an Italian may be found who unites superior ability with a character intrinsically high and honourable, the chances are that there will have been developed in him, by the series of his past experiences, such an instinctive intelligence of affairs and possible situations, such a subtlety of penetration, such a facility of inferring the whole of a case from a part, such a tact and exactness of sympathy, as will make him invaluable to those about him in the best offices of a casuist and confessor. Whether there may not be a hint here at the *rationale* of the success in English society of Italian father-confessors of a very different sort, Heaven knows, from that to which our Ruffini belonged, I will not stop to inquire. But, if I were to think of the good ideal of a father-confessor—not as a wily professional, not as having any drift of his own, not as seeking the office, but as having it thrust upon him, a good deal to his own discomfort, by a little circle of friends who had discovered his wisdom and worth in the office—then it would be of Ruffini that I should think. I can see him yet, sitting as it were in the middle of us, receiving our visits independently one after another; each having something now and then to consult him about—both those who were settled in life, and his seniors or equals in age, and whose references to him would be about matters of a maturer family-kind, and those younger ones among us to whom a man of between thirty and forty might more naturally be a Mentor. What penetration he had; how he understood a case half-told; how gravely he would nod in silence for a time as he listened; and then how distinct the

farther questioning, and how exact the judgment! And no feigning or flattery! He would wound, if necessary; he would use the scalpel; he would blame; there were times when he was purposely harsh—when, falling back on a little dissertation on some course of conduct, or way of thinking, the prevalence of which among men in general he had always marked for reprobation as weak or evil, he would give his patient to understand that he detected too much of that in the present instance. But, at other times, what tenderness in his treatment, what thoughtfulness in his sympathy, what anxiety to see the matter brought to a right issue, and, if it was possible for him, what willingness to take personal trouble to that end, and to interpose by letter or personally! In this way I suppose he was made the depository of the confidences of many more people than could have been related to each other in any other way than through such common indebtedness to him. Each was sure of him, and that what was entrusted to Ruffini was safe under more than sacerdotal seal. Of course, in that little fraternity of which I have spoken as more particularly recognising each other as Ruffinians, there was so much of common acquaintance with each other's affairs that, when they met with Ruffini among them, the limits of secrecy were narrowed to those matters appertaining to each which they had severally chosen to confide to Ruffini only, and there was plenty of scope for free colloquy, still of a confidential kind, among all alike. We could banter each other in an esoteric way about this or that; we could criticise our neighbours, or absentees of our own set; we could relapse into that *deshabille* and *abandon* of ideas, humours, and whimsies, which make gatherings of friends delightful, and in which it is wonderful to see what resources for chat and genuine fellowship there are away from the inventoried topics of politics and books. There was that in Ruffini which made him competent to a host's place even in these little revels of friendly sense and nonsense intermixed; and I can re-

member how gracefully he regulated them, and how, without speaking much himself, he would always keep up with what was going, and, by an anecdote, a pithy comment, a momentary phantasy of humour, impart to the whole a flavour which was characteristic of his presence.

There is no family, or fraternity of friends, as every one knows, that has not its own little stock of phrases, proverbs, catch-words, images, and bits of rhyme, invented within itself, and invested with associations which make them keen and full of meaning within the circle of the initiated, though out of that circle they might seem meaningless or common. Our Ruffinian fraternity in Edinburgh was no exception; and, of the phrases which went to and fro among us, there were not a few of which Ruffini was the real or putative father:— It happened, for example, that one of us—a friend of Ruffini who may perhaps read this, and to whom it is not the sole debt of gratitude I owe that through him I first came to know Ruffini—it happened that this friend had come into possession of an oriental ring, having an inscription on it, cut on an emerald, in characters which no one at hand could decipher. The German theologian, Tholuck, having come to Edinburgh on a visit, the ring was shown to him; whereupon it became known that the inscription was in Syriac, and might be interpreted, "*This too will pass.*" Here was a flash from the East for Ruffini. He appropriated the saying; we voted it to be his; and again and again it would come from him, in this or in that fresh application, as an ultimate word of his philosophy. "This is your agony now, this your annoyance;" so we may expand what the Syriac sage meant: "grievous it is, and it cannot but occupy you; but you have had agonies and annoyances before this one, and where are they now? Well, Time has not ceased to flow, and *this too will pass!*" Very Syriac comfort this, perhaps, but it suited Ruffini; nor, after his first appropriation of the aphorism, did it ever need to be expanded. The

four words, "*This too will pass*," were sufficient in themselves.—Another saying, which came to be proverbial among us, but which will not, I fear, become current in the world in the profound sense we gave to it, originated in one of our excursions to the Pentlands. One of us, who had taken his rod and fishing-tackle with him, persisted in fishing a pond in the hollow among the moors, while the rest strolled about hither and thither. Still, as we came back at intervals to the edge of the pond, there was our friend fishing assiduously, but with not a fish to show for his trouble. He was a most determined fisher, one of the most skilful fishers in Scotland ; and he would, I believe, have been fishing there to this very hour, but for a simple question put by Ruffini on perhaps our thirteenth visit to the water's edge, when the afternoon light was beginning to gather over the brown moors, and still there was no fish in the basket or on the bank. To most of us our friend's non-success was of no very deep concern ; and we had amusement and revenge enough by furtively abstracting his brandy-flask from his basket, and setting it up on the bank (not till it was empty) to be aimed at with stones, till an exact hit or two smashed the glass into shivers within the wicker-work. But Ruffini had laid the entire matter to heart, and was meditating. "How is it?" he at last said aloud after regarding the fisher for a while with unwearied benevolence,— "how is it that no fish are caught by Frank? Is it that there *are* no fish?" It had occurred to him that our friend might have been for some hours the victim of a hallucination, and that the pond might be destitute of what he was soliciting from it so painfully. Laughed over at the time as a simplicity, the question was moralized by us afterwards into applications quite away from ponds among the Pentlands. Whenever we heard of any kind of labour that had been meritorious but fruitless, our question was stereotyped, "Is it because there *are* no fish?"—Yet another of these silly-sweet reminiscences. We were teasing

Ruffini one evening in his own rooms on the subject of his bachelorship ; and, after various forms of the nonsense, we tried him with a variety of one of Boswell's questions to Johnson. We supposed that a baby were brought to him, and that, by inexorable conditions, he was bound to take charge of it himself, and always to have it under his own eye in the room where we were sitting. "What would you do with it, Ruffini?" we asked. "O, I would put it in the coal-scuttle there, poor thing, and give it a pipe." Necessarily, Ruffini's imp-baby in the coal-scuttle was always after that a visionary presence in our colloquies ; and to this day I cannot see a coal-scuttle of a particular shape without thinking how conveniently it would hold a baby that had learnt to smoke.—As visionary as the baby in the coal-scuttle was a certain great book which Ruffini would speak of with mock-mystery as containing everything conceivable among its contents, elaborated into the most perfect possible form, and which he used to call "My novel," or more fully, "My novel, which I am going to write." It was always spoken of, with utter confusion of tenses, as an achieved reality which had yet to come into existence. Were some person of eccentric character talked of, "Yes, he is a very strange character," Ruffini would say, "and I have put him in my novel which I am going to write." Did some discussion arise which it was desirable to stop, "Ah ! you should see," would be Ruffini's way of stopping it, "how wonderfully that is all settled in my novel—my novel which I am going to write." And so on in other cases, till this *opus magnum* which existed somewhere, if its author could but get at it, became our ideal repository of all the historical knowledge, all the philosophy, all the ethics, and all the poetry yet attainable in the world. In so jesting with himself there was, moreover, I doubt not, a kind of covert sarcasm upon the exaggerated estimate set by most people upon book-makers and book-making, and upon any early dreams he may himself have had in that direction. Not in that form was Ruf-



fini to leave any monument of himself of which bibliographers could take cognisance. A little Italian tale which he had written hastily while in London, and had got a friend to publish in Italy with a view to its producing a small sum that would then have been acceptable, had been suppressed by the police on the chance-discovery of the authorship. He amused himself now and then in Edinburgh with an Italian song or sonnet; and there may be copies of some of those fine Ruffinian sonnets among his friends, and of one or two of the exquisite songs, without his name, on stray music-sheets. Once, to oblige a friend, he wrote a paper in English, which was printed with other papers in a volume. But there was something hard and laborious in his written English, as compared with his graceful use of our language in speech, and I do not think he would ever have attained, in this fashion, the simple and easy excellence of his brother Giovanni.

With many lonely hours, notwithstanding the frequency about him of so many attached friends, and with thoughts revolving in his mind in those hours which none of these friends could altogether penetrate or share, Ruffini had reconciled himself, as I have said, to the prospect of a residence in Edinburgh for the rest of his days. His lot, as an exile, had so far fallen not ill, and not a sign anywhere in the political sky augured the likelihood of a change. Accordingly, when, in 1847, I left Edinburgh, it was with no thought that there would be a farther break in the fraternity by the more important loss to it of Ruffini. From amid new scenes and associations in London my thoughts would still revert to him among the rest, as sitting in the well-known upper room, or trudging along George Street with his cane, and, mayhap, if the weather were all the worse, and the cold moist winds were coming in mist up the Firth from the east, shivering with the cruel usage, and twinged in body and in spirit. There would be an occasional letter from him, but in none anything significant of a change

at hand for him or for Italy, unless one were inclined to prophesy rather wildly from certain liberal proceedings of the mild new Pope, Pio Nono. But the year 1848 came, and that memorable moment in 1848 came when, going down the Strand, I saw placards in the windows of the news-shops, "Abdication of Louis-Philippe," and the thrill ran through me at the words which ran through thousands of others. And then there came the muffled roar of revolutions, and from every land in Europe a sound as of multitudes huzzahing and armies on the tramp, and one knew that an era had arrived of vicissitudes swifter than at the recent rate, and of mutual reckonings and revenges between peoples and governments. And in the midst, on the lovely Mediterranean land that interested one most, one saw the Italian populations all uprisen, and the despots cowering white-faced at their palace gates, and swearing constitutions or anything, and, wonder of wonders! one who had hitherto been a despot, the sombre Piedmontese king, coming forward like a man at the end of his life, and dashing his recreant past into oblivion, and, on some inspiration of God or of his better ambition, summoning the Italians to his standard, and throwing down his gauntlet to the Austrian. And one grew dizzy with gazing on the turmoil and observing all the effects. Some of the effects were homely enough—as, for example, when Italian exiles in our own cities broke up their little domiciles, and tended, by ones, twos, and threes, to the mother-land that had need of them, or would at least receive them now if they came. And this effect enacted itself with more of public attention than usual in the case of one refugee in Edinburgh. There came a day when there was a sale of Ruffini's furniture, and the tradespeople with whom he had had dealings bought little articles of the furniture as mementoes of him, and he prepared to take leave of the streets and the friends that for eight years had been fond of him. Although he made jests on the smallness of the contribu-

tion that was likely to be made in his feeble person to the armies of Italy, they were jests in which no one joined him who knew how earnestly he had forethought of the duty of every Italian on the hypothesis of such a moment as had now arrived. And so, between his leave-taking of our common friends in Edinburgh and his crossing the channel for Italy, I had two or three days of him in London. We passed a day together at Windsor, which he had never seen; and I remember that, on passing one of the red-coated sentries at a gateway going up to the Castle, he looked round at the man ruefully, and spoke with envy of his drilled faculty, and the knack he must have with his musket. The next day he was whirled for ever from my sight. All the rest of him, though it is nominally a tale of several years, is, to me, an unfeathered dream. We heard, indeed, of his arrival in his native town, of the haste of the Genoese to do honour to him and his brother by electing them as the representatives of the city in the Sardinian Chamber of Deputies, and of the participation of the two brothers in the proceedings upon which so much depended. An Italian newspaper or two, containing notices of such things, reached us. Then we heard of the appointment of the elder brother, for a time, to the post of Sardinian ambassador to France. But of Agostino, meanwhile, the news was sad. What strength had remained in his long-enfeebled frame had been too little for the tear and wear of new anxieties. Utterly prostrate, at last, by a paralytic affliction, he had to watch that progress of events amid which he would have fain been active, as a helpless and bedridden invalid. He had been restored to his native land too late. The mother to whose declining years he had been given back, the youngest of her sons, and the last survivor save one, knew that she must nurse and outlive him. Why protract the story? Migration was tried to a sanitarium in Switzerland. But his last resting-place was to be in Italy,—

the Italy which had not then attained the state he could have wished for her, and in which we now see her, but which, looking at the actual Sardinia of Victor Emmanuel, he could think of as so far secure, and as not without hope of a better future. Here, at Taggia, a small coast-town in the Sardinian states, between Nice and Genoa, and in the vicinity, as I think, of that family-property of olive-plantations of which he had loved to speak, he waited, for months, in constant pain, the advent of the *severa amica*, as he had learnt to call death. His mother was with him to the last, and his brother arrived in time to see him die. His death took place on the 3d of January, 1855. On the 5th of January, he was buried in a new cemetery at Taggia, the authorities of the town, the national guard, and a great concourse of people, attending him to his grave. Forty-three years was the age which Ruffini had attained; and eight years of these, from his thirtieth year to his thirty-ninth, had been passed in Edinburgh.

Edinburgh, without Ruffini, is not to me the Edinburgh that it was. But, of those who were there while he lived in it, and who have also vanished since then from it and from life, there were at least three of whom I should like to say something ere I take farewell of the noble city. One of the Ruffinian fraternity in some sense, but to be recollected for signal qualities and a career of his own apart from any fraternity, was Dr. Samuel Brown. Utterly out of the fraternity, but worth gazing at for his massive look in a crowd anywhere, and by chance known to me by closer vision than is possible in a crowd, was Hugh Miller. For a while also in my time De Quincey was in Edinburgh, and I had a glimpse—I can call it little more than a glimpse—of that flitting intellectual wizard. Keeping something like the proportions which my own memory assigns, I shall reserve these three men for the last of my Edinburgh papers.